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[THE SACRIFICE.]

OLIVE'S TRUST.

By the Author of "Fault on Both Sides," &c.

CHAPTER V.

What man so wise, what earthly wit so ware,
As to decry the crafty, cunning train,
By which deceit doth mask in vizor fair,
And cast her colours dyed deep in guile
To seem like truth, whose shape she well can feign?

Spenser.

WHEN Mrs. Greville Paisley came to look for Olive she found her in the library in a species of trance, or stupor—not fainting, yet scarcely conscious. In her hand she clutched tightly the note from her father she had just received and read, while her eyes stared blindly forward into vacancy.

She did not hear the approach of her father's visitor over the soft carpet, but when Mrs. Paisley laid one of her white, jewelled hands on Olive's shoulder she started, and shrank away in repugnance.

The next moment, fully aroused, she sprang to her feet, and with flashing eyes and quivering limbs confronted the handsome, placid lady standing before her.

"This is your doing!" she cried, in a voice that fully betrayed her excessive agitation. "This is your doing, you wicked woman! Oh! why could you not leave our happy home in peace? Why did you come here to torture us? What have you done with my father? Tell me—tell me!"

In her eagerness she clenched her fingers on Mrs. Paisley's bare white arm so fiercely as to draw from her a cry of pain.

"Are you mad, Olive? What do you mean?" asked the lady, angrily shaking off the other's hold, and for the moment a flash of fierce hate lit up her usually calm and handsome face, but the look passed away instantly, and in her usual half-kind, half-bantering manner she wound her long, little arm round Olive's waist.

"What is it, dearest?" she asked. "Something

extraordinary must have happened to excite you so strangely. Speak, Olive, am I not your friend?"

"Friend!" Olive echoed, in a tone of the greatest scorn. "What is friendship? Does it consist in fair words and stage embraces? No. Friendship is a holy tie between two hearts, two souls, two minds, either one of which will risk all, suffer all, do all for the other. To a friend one naturally turns for consolation in distress: to—"

"Precisely," Mrs. Greville Paisley interrupted; "to a friend one naturally turns for consolation in distress—for that reason I come to you, Olive, and beseech you to confide in me. Your father's friend—may I not be yours as well?"

"You are a false friend," Olive answered, a strange light gleaming in her eyes. "If you were a friend you would not have brought this misery on our house."

"My dear girl, you speak enigmas. What misery? What has happened?"

"Read this letter."

Mrs. Paisley took the letter which had just arrived from Rawdon Markham, and opened it with something of a contemptuous smile upon her face. Olive, standing before her, stern and accusing, watched her narrowly as she perused it, but if she expected to read anything in her visitor's face she was much mistaken.

Mrs. Greville Paisley shrugged her white shoulders, and elevated her arched eyebrows, then she gave the note back into Olive's hand.

"Well?" said she, interrogatively.

"You know where my father is—tell me, and let me go to him."

"I haven't a notion, my dear. He's run away from me, not with me."

She spoke lightly and jestingly.

Olive was scarcely able to keep her indignation within bounds.

"You are false and insincere!" she said. "Before you came this house was the home of peace and happiness; now you have ruined it. You have driven a father from his children, and have brought a blight upon our lives."

"My dear Olive," answered Mrs. Paisley, still provokingly good humoured, "you would make a fortune on the stage. Come, come, you are excited now, you will be cooler by-and-bye. After all, what has happened to cause all this fuss and anger?"

"What has happened?" repeated Olive, quite taken aback by the other's coolness. "What has happened? Is it nothing to lose a loving father and a happy home?"

"My dear girl, you are frightfully ignorant of the ways of the world. You let the pretty sentiments of goody-goody books guide you, instead of the rules of busy, bustling life. Rouse yourself, Olive, and be a woman."

"Yes, yes," answered the girl, thoughtfully, but speaking to herself and not to Mrs. Paisley. "Yes, I must rouse myself indeed, and prove myself worthy of my father's trust."

"Such things as these occur every day in the world," continued Mrs. Paisley, complacently. "People are always disappearing and reappearing again when they are least expected. But you know nothing of the world, Olive."

"I desire to know nothing of it, if the knowledge is to make me as cold and insincere as you are."

"Pshaw, Olive! Why do you harp on this one string? I tell you, I wish to befriend you; I did before this grief came upon you, now I desire it doubly. Poor dear, I pity you."

She spoke calmly and played with her bracelet as she spoke.

Olive answered her angrily and with flashing eyes. "If you really desire to befriend me—if you pity me in truth, you will tell me where to find my father."

"I tell you for the second time I know no more than yourself."

"At least you can inform me of his reason for so suddenly, so strangely deserting his home and his children."

"My dear, there may be a thousand reasons."

"Tell me one."

"Half a dozen, with pleasure. Men are restless,

unquiet creatures; they like change. He may have gone to London, to Paris, to Vienna to enjoy himself. Men, again, are mysterious, reticent creatures. He may have been living beyond his means; he may have run away to avoid his creditors. Once more, men are incomprehensible, passionate creatures. He may have fallen in love with a milkmaid, or a crossing-sweeper, or somebody else's wife, and—

"Mrs. Paisley," interrupted Olive as she clenched her tiny hands, "you may consider my grief a fit subject for your jests, but—"

"Jest! I am in sober earnest."

"In sober earnest! You profess to be my poor father's friend! You say you know him well, yet you dare—to me, his daughter—to speak in such terms of him! Ah, Mrs. Paisley! I know him better than you. I know him for the noblest, kindest, best man that ever lived—incapable alike of an ignoble thought or of a dishonourable deed."

"You are a strange girl," said Mrs. Greville Paisley, and she looked at Olive with an expression half of doubt, half of suppressed merriment.

"Strange! Is it so strange in the world to which you belong for a daughter to love her father? Oh, tell me where he is! let me go to him, let me share his grief—I ask no more."

"I am not your father's keeper."

"Tell me then, where is Captain Paisley? They set out together and neither has returned."

"My dear, Greville is his own master. He comes and goes as it pleases him. If he come back I shall welcome him—if he do not I shall get on very well without him."

"He is your husband."

"Undoubtedly. If he wasn't I might be more interested in his proceedings."

Olive turned abruptly from Mrs. Greville Paisley and walked to the window. Palling aside the heavy curtains, she looked out upon the garden, fitfully illuminated by the moon, whose light struggled over and anon through the thick, murky clouds hurrying and twirling before a strong wind across the sky.

The action was purposeless and unpremeditated on her part. It was not that she desired to gaze upon the familiar lawn, but that she wished to escape from Mrs. Paisley, whose every word jarred inexpressibly on her feelings.

Between those two it was impossible there could ever be any sympathy, their natures were wholly antagonistic. Neither could like the other; but while Mrs. Paisley hid her sentiments under a mask of exaggerated friendship Olive showed hers only too openly.

As Olive looked from the window it seemed to her that there was some living thing moving along in the deep, black shadow of the shrubbery, and she strained her eyes into the darkness till she discerned, or thought she discerned, the form of a man creeping stealthily along close to the trees and shrubs.

"What is that? Who is that?" she cried.

In a moment Mrs. Greville Paisley was by her side, gazing out into the garden.

"I see nothing," that lady said.

"Yes, there—there, close to the holly bushes! Now it has come out upon the lawn; it is coming towards us—nearer—nearer!"

"I see nothing," said Mrs. Paisley, a second time; but the tone of her voice betrayed uneasiness and lacked assurance.

Never taking her eyes from the shadowy figure, Olive stood silent and motionless, waiting for the next gleam of moonlight to reveal it to her more distinctly.

The wind howled and wailed round the house with sounds like the moaning and crying of one in pain, and the clouds scurried fast over the sky. Presently, though but for a moment, there came a lift in the sombre pall, and the silvery moonlight shone full into the garden of Ripplebrook Lodge, full upon the figure of a man standing erect in the centre of the lawn with eyes fixed upon the house.

"It is papa—it is papa!" Olive cried, in a tone of wild delight. "He has come back! Oh, let me go to him!"

In her eager haste she strove to unfasten the window which opened out into the garden, but ere she could do this the clouds again covered the moon, and the figure disappeared.

"Gone—gone!" she sobbed. "And not a word to me! Oh, Heaven! he is dead!"

Without another syllable she sank back senseless in a dead faint.

Mrs. Greville Paisley, the calm, cool, collected, unemotional woman of fashion, trembled so that she could scarcely stand, and was forced to steady herself by the help of a chair.

When in a few moments, she recovered herself sufficiently to call for help for Olive, the servants, as well as Cora and Alice, who ran to the library at the sound of her voice, noticed that her face was pale and

ghastly as that of a corpse, that her voice trembled, and her limbs shook.

"What is the matter? What has happened?" every one asked.

"Cannot you see? Miss Markham has fainted. Attend to her instead of asking questions."

Then, while all were engaged in ministering to the suffering girl, Mrs. Greville Paisley noiselessly and unnoticed drew the heavy curtains back across the window, and, with light and soundless step, left the library for her own room.

"Where is he? where is my father?" were Olive's first words on returning to consciousness.

They told her that he had not yet come home.

She looked incredulously at them, but when they assured her again of the fact she turned from them with a weary sigh, and Cora, bending over her sister, heard her murmur, in heartbroken accents:

"He is dead—he is dead!"

They supported her to her room, and Cora would have remained with her through the night, or at all events until she was better, but this Olive sternly refused.

She wished to be alone—alone with her thoughts. Situated as she was, the sight even of the loved and familiar faces of her sisters was repugnant to her.

All that she desired was to be left through the still, peaceful hours of the night—not to sleep, but to reflect. Her eyes ached and her limbs were weary, yet it was not sleep she needed but peace of mind.

Racked, tortured, and tormented by a thousand fears, who could refuse to pity this young girl, left so strangely by her father, as she sat, sad and dejected, alone in the solitude of her own chamber, the very embodiment of grief and despair?

As yet Cora and Alice knew nothing of the cause of their sister's fainting fit, nor of the contents of the letter she had received from her father.

Olive had determined to keep the news from them until she had mentally arranged how best to discharge the trust confided to her, and still endeavouring to solve the problem the morning light, struggling through the bars of the venetian blinds, fell on her face—a face pale, haggard, and despairing, hardly resembling the face which beamed so brightly at the Chambercombe ball four-and-twenty hours before.

Another day had dawned. Olive through the night had boldly confronted the difficulty of her position, but had not succeeded in mastering it.

Another day had dawned—a day big with fate for Olive Markham and her sisters.

CHAPTER VI.

Yet, oh, yet, thyself deceive not;

Love may sink by slow decay;

But by sudden wrench, believe not,

Hearts can thus be torn away.

But who can tell what cause had that fair maid

To use him so that loved her so well? Spranger.

With the morning came the necessity of breaking the sad tidings of their father's disappearance to Cora and Alice.

Lighter in heart, gayer in spirits than their elder sister, they were naturally disposed to take a far less gloomy view of affairs than was Olive.

They simply understood from the letter that their father was for a time compelled to leave his home, but would return on an indefinite "some day," when they would all be happy as before.

Mrs. Greville Paisley, in the most charmingly coquettish morning costume, was at the breakfast-table, without a trace of the excitement into which she had been betrayed the previous night. She did her best to support the two younger Miss Markhams in their views.

"My dears, it is absurd to suppose any harm has happened to your father. He is obliged to go away for a short time. Pooh! It is nothing—a mere trifle, a bagatelle. Come, Mademoiselle Olive, let the sunshine of smiles light up your pretty face. You make me quite unhappy to see you so miserable."

If Mrs. Greville Paisley was unhappy from that or any other cause she managed to conceal her feelings very well.

Nobody, hearing her laugh, talk, gossip, sing, play, and chatter that morning, would have given her credit for being miserable.

Every tone of her voice, every look, every gesture jarred upon Olive. Not so with Cora and Alice. They were younger, and had none of that penetration that sees below the surface, that discovers the frown of hate beneath the smile of friendship, that sees the asp lurking in the chaplet of flowers, and they believed Mrs. Paisley to be simply the most beautiful, enchanting, talented, and delightful woman in the world—and perhaps they were right; only Olive held a very different opinion.

The strong wind which had sent the clouds scudding across the face of the moon during the night had cleared them from the sky by the morning, and the sun rose on one of those delightful autumn days of which we see but too few in this our island home.

A soft, warm breeze rustled the dead leaves; and the distant wooded hills, rich in the variegated foliage of the late year, when every hue of brown, orange, russet, red, and yellow tinged the trees, looked doubly brilliant in the clear, golden sunlight.

The birds carolled forth their morning thanksgiving as Olive stepped through the French window out upon the lawn, and gazed with sad eyes at the view she knew and loved so well, that seemed to have decked itself in more than all its customary glory as if to mock her sadness.

Her lips moved, but no sound came from them.

In spirit, she was bidding adieu to her childhood's home, to all that was most dear to her, and the tears rose into her eyes as she thought how soon the time would come when this fair scene over Ripplebrook and Chambercombe would be but a remembrance to her.

She was not deceived by Mrs. Paisley's pleasantness or sophistries. She knew her father well, she knew his letter to her meant more, far more than Mrs. Paisley would have her believe; she knew it was no common affliction, no ordinary disaster that had driven him from his children and his home.

To her care he had committed Cora and Alice. Everything was left in her hands. Coupled with this trust was an injunction to consider the Greville Paisleys her dearest friends; but that she could not do, for in her mind there was a firm and settled conviction that they were at the bottom of all the evil.

To find out the clue to the mystery was her first object, and as she stood there on the smooth lawn on the very spot where the previous night she had fancied she had seen her father she murmured to Heaven a prayer for strength that she might never be turned aside from her design.

"Give me help and strength," she said, "and grant me power to prosecute my intention with never-tiring perseverance; let me be dead to everything but this one thought, this one motive of my life, till such time as those who have wrought this cruel wrong may have met the punishment they merit!"

No one could have looked in her face at that moment and have doubted her sincerity. It was illumined with a strange and fervent lustre, and her eyes, turned heavenward, sparkled with an unwonted light.

For this purpose Olive Markham was ready and willing to sacrifice everything which makes life most acceptable. She prayed for strength that she might do this, and her first trial was much nearer at hand than she imagined.

Alone and unaided she would have to pursue her course. There was no one in the whole wide world to whom she could look for advice or sympathy. She stood isolated, by herself. Cora and Alice were too young, too frivolous to enter into her feelings, to join her in her self-imposed task, and even as she thought of them she heard the sound of their gay, merry laughter, coupled with that of Mrs. Greville Paisley, issuing from the breakfast parlour.

Impatiently, almost angrily, she moved farther away from the house, and seated herself on a bench beneath a fine chestnut tree.

It had been her favourite seat in happier days. There she had passed many a summer morning, gazing over the spreading landscape of hill and dale stretching far away on either hand; there she had passed some of the most joyous hours of her life; and there it was that Charlie Wilding, driven from his home by a stern stepfather, had on the eve of his departure for foreign lands spoken those words that had made her heart beat with pleasure—had told her that he loved her, and longed to make her his wife.

All these memories thronged into her brain as she sank upon the bench; but only for a few minutes did she suffer herself to indulge in recollections of the past. Then she beat them resolutely back, depositing them alike from her head and heart to give place to anticipations for the future—not bright, happy, joyous anticipations, but stern, hard, cold, and unrelenting ones.

She would fight the world alone, until such time as her purpose should be accomplished. However difficult might be the task, she would not shrink from it; however disastrous might be the battle, she would never surrender with life; yet at the very outset she encountered her first rebuff.

Her busy brain plotting and scheming, she sat long beneath the shadow of the chestnut, heedless of the prospect before her, her eyes covered by her hand.

From this busy waking dream she was aroused by hearing her own name uttered in a voice she knew full well, and, looking up, she recognised, with a cry of joy, the bronzed and bearded face of Charlie Wilding.

The next instant both her little hands were clasped in his, and he was pouring forth a perfect volume of affectionate incoherences.

"You have not forgotten me, Olive? You are still faithful and true to your old vows? You still love

me?" he asked, with all a lover's fervour. "Nay, I will not ask for a better answer than your greeting. Your eyes, your whole face lighted up when you recognised me, and now I clasp against your dear hands in mine, and feel you are my own, my very own!"

Truly her face had beamed with pleasure when first her eyes had rested on his stalwart frame, truly her exclamation had been one of unfeigned joy; but ere he had ceased speaking, ere the expression of his first rapturous joy had ceased, a shadow came over Olive's face, and she drew away her hands from his and lowered her eyes to the turf at her feet.

Charlie Wilding looked at her, perplexed, and waited for her to speak, but she remained mute.

Her first temptation to swerve from the path she had prayed for strength to follow undeviatingly had come sooner, far sooner than she had anticipated, and the temptation was one that needed all her strength to resist.

She loved the man who stood before her a suppliant for her heart, she had loved him for many years, and now, in the very moment of their meeting after a long and weary separation, she was called upon—at least, such was the view she took of it—to renounce him for ever, or to be faithless to her trust and to her purpose.

"Why do you not speak to me, Olive? Have you no word of greeting for me?" he asked, and there was in his voice some of that cruel, hard, cynical tone which had characterised his soliloquies on the night of the Chambercombe ball, when he returned to his mother's house an outcast afraid to show his face.

Still Olive remained silent, not from want of words or want of heart, but from positive fear of speech. She felt she could not trust herself to answer him.

"Still dumb, Olive? Is it that another has effaced the recollection of me from your heart?"

"No, no!" she cried, passionately.

"Speak, then, dearest; speak and tell me the love you once gave me is still mine; tell me the dreams, the hopes, the fancies which have filled my brain since last we parted were not mere illusions, and that I have come back to England to meet at least one loving welcome!"

"Forget—forget them all," she said, in a low voice, quivering with agitation.

He started from her, and looked into her face with such an expression of heart-rending grief that, had he but followed up the advantage by pleading his cause earnestly and eloquently, she must have yielded; but his pride had taken offence, and his next words were hard and bitter.

"Faithless! Faithless, like all the world. If a man desires a friend to love him, it were better for him to choose a dog. Dogs are always faithful."

Olive put her hands before her face to hide her tears, and he continued:

"You do not love me. Absence, that has only served to increase my affection, has deadened yours. I came back to England with but one thought, one hope, and now—Well, well, life is nothing but one long series of bitter disappointments. I might have known how it would be. I was foolish to believe in a woman's love."

"Spare me," sobbed Olive. "I—I love you—I do love you."

In a moment he was at her feet, her hand again in his, as he poured forth the vows and protestations of love which are old as the hills, but which sound ever fresh and ever new to those who hearken to them.

"You do love me, and you will be my wife?"

Such was the burden of Charles Wilding's speech, but for answer Olive shook her head sadly.

"It cannot be," she said.

"Why not? Who can prevent it? If you love me, Olive, as you say—"

"Oh, forgive me—forgive me, Charlie. I do love you with my whole heart, but—but I cannot—cannot be your wife."

"Why not?"

"Do not ask me. Perhaps in years to come—but no, no, we must not think of it; it can never be. I shall never marry."

"You are speaking in riddles, Olive. If you really love me, why cannot you be my wife?"

There was a long silence. In her heart Olive deliberated whether she might not confide in Charlie Wilding, and ask him to help her in the great task she had set herself; but Olive was a reticent, sensitive girl, and she feared she would meet rather with ridicule than with sympathy, and she checked the words that rose to her lips and they remained unuttered.

The returned wanderer misinterpreted her silence. "I understand you," he said. "There is another, perhaps many another suitor in the field, possessed of advantages that are not mine—wealth, title, land, and all those baubles that turn women's heads."

"No, no, it is not so!"

"At all events there is one. I have watched you with him—Captain Paisley! who or what he may be I know not, but—"

"Captain Paisley!" Olive cried, in sheer amazement.

"Yes, Captain Paisley. You are surprised that I should know his name; but let me tell you, Olive, two nights ago, when I reached Chambercombe after many months of absence, I found it lighted up for gay festivity. Expecting—hoping you might be a guest, I strained my eyes through a window and saw the attentions that man paid you. I watched him, I saw him dance with you, talk with you, lead you to your carriage, and—"

"But, Charles—oh, listen to me, I implore you—"

"Tush, Olive; I prefer the evidence of my own eyes to any other. It was not only from the ball-room scene that I judge. Last night, late, I stole up here to watch if I might see the light in the window of your room. I waited, I watched, and what do you suppose I saw?"

Instantly Olive remembered the vision, the apparition—call it what you will—that had so disturbed her, and in a tone of eager anxiety she asked for further details.

"I will tell you. In yonder shrubbery I remained concealed—for, as you know, my presence in Ripplebrook is perforce a secret—and as I waited, watching, I became conscious that it was not I alone who waited and watched."

"What do you mean? Tell me, tell me who besides yourself was there?"

"Ah, it flatters your vanity that so many should watch your window!"

"No; it is cruel and ungenerous to say that. Oh, if you only knew how much was involved in this you would not keep me in suspense. Tell me, was it—was it my father?"

"Your father! Olive, do you think such a device can allay my suspicion? There were two men, and one was Captain Paisley!"

"Two men! Who was the other? For pity's sake tell me who was the other!"

"Surely you know your own admirers best. I did not see his face, but I have no doubt, Miss Markham, you can make a very shrewd guess as to who your other visitor may have been. At the time, though seeing this, I still cherished the hope that they were impudent interlopers, and that I still might retain the place I once held in your heart; but this conversation has undeceived me. I know you now. I value you at your proper worth. If it is any gratification to you to learn that you have made a fool of an honest man, I will confess such is the case. I am the fool. I flattered myself that Olive Markham was no flirt, no jilt, and that her heart was mine. But women have no hearts; they cannot understand the fierce passion love is to a man, and—"

"Oh, Charles, listen to me. I—"

"No, not a word. If I die for it that whiskered puppy, Captain Paisley, shall never call you wife; neither will I. Whatever claims I had, or fancied I had, to your hand, I renounce. Farewell, Olive; may you never know what it is to find yourself spurned and slighted by one you love! Farewell, Olive, but, cruelly as you have used me, may Heaven bless you!"

Uttering these last words, Charles Wilding ran down the steep bank of the garden, and, vaulting the low pailings, was in the road and away almost before the full sense of his cruel sentences had penetrated to Olive's understanding.

Then, when it was too late, she stretched out her arms, and, in a tone of piteous entreaty, cried:

"Come back—oh, come back, Charlie, and I will tell you everything."

There was no response to her appeal, and she sank back upon the seat from which she had half raised herself, and, burying her face in her hands, burst into a flood of tears.

Nobody but herself knew or could know the pain that interview had been to her. There was but one thing dearer to her than Charlie Wilding, and that was her father's trust.

Rightly or wrongly, she believed she had acted for the best. She had done what she considered to be her duty, and it had nearly broken her heart.

For some time she remained upon that garden bench, communing with herself and weeping bitter tears of anguish. She could bear anything but that Charlie should think evilly of her. She forgave him all his harsh words, and, after the manner of loving women, reproached herself sadly for having occasioned them; while he, her lover, with aching heart, was hurrying along the road cursing all womankind for the fickle jades he fancied them.

Olive was roused from her sad and tearful reverie by a voice she knew and hated. She would rather at that moment that any person in the wide world than Mrs. Greville Paisley should intrude upon her

sorrow, yet it was that lady's bland, bantering voice she heard speaking from the leafy shelter of the shrubbery.

"May I venture, Olive? may I come near?" she said. "Has the gallant swain gone, and is the wedding-day fixed? Oh, how sly of you, Olive, not to tell me the truant Charlie had come back."

"I don't understand you, Mrs. Paisley," Olive replied, indignantly.

"No one is so slow of comprehension as those are who don't wish to understand. Come, come, dear, have no secrets from me. Remember I am your best friend. Your father has told you to consider me so."

"It is the one thing, Mrs. Paisley, in which I must venture to disobey my father. You and I can never be friends; but, at least, we may speak the truth to each other. Tell me, how was it that Captain Paisley was in this garden last night, concealed in yonder shrubbery, yet never announced his return to those most interested in it?"

Mrs. Greville Paisley's cheeks blanched perceptibly, and for once she seemed completely taken aback.

"Captain—Paisley—Greville—here?" she said, in a tone of genuine surprise.

"Yes, and within a few yards of where you now stand. Explain the mystery."

"Olive, I declare to you I know no more of my husband's movements than yourself. If he was here last night, this is the first I have heard of it."

Again Olive's heart sank. She had hoped through Captain Paisley to obtain some clue to help her in unravelling the mystery, but for once Mrs. Paisley's words carried conviction with them, and Olive felt that that lady was in truth as much surprised as herself to hear of her husband's presence in the garden of Ripplebrook Lodge on the previous night.

"What strange creatures men are," resumed Mrs. Greville Paisley, in her customary light, bantering manner. "Fancy two staid, respectable fellows, like your father and my husband, gallivanting about the country, hiding in shrubberies, playing at ghosts, and all sorts of nonsense. Don't you ever marry, dear, you don't know what a bore it is—not, of course, that it is of any good my saying so to you after the scene I have just witnessed. Ah, Olive, for all your demure looks and prim manner you can make assignments with handsome young men the same as the worst and most wicked of us!"

"I should have imagined, Mrs. Paisley, that you would have scorned to play the spy upon your host's daughter," Olive answered, colouring, stung by the taunts and sneers of her professed friend.

"My dear girl, I didn't play the spy, and as for love scenes I have quite enough of my own on hand without bothering about other people's."

"It was chance, of course, that brought you here?"

"Of course, my pet. Walking in the shrubbery, I heard a man's voice, ranting and raving, as the horrid creatures have a way of doing when they fancy themselves in love, and—"

"And you listened?"

"Yes, darling, of course; feeling the motherly interest—not that I'm old enough to be your mother—I do in you, how could I do otherwise?"

"And not content with listening, you came near enough to watch and spy?"

"My own precious Olive, how strangely you talk to me! Cannot you understand how deeply concerned I am for your welfare? You might have fallen into the hands of some low, scheming adventurer—as it is, though our Charlie is not so eligible as I could have wished, I think he'll do—you have my approval, my dear. Bless you, as they say on the stage."

Mrs. Greville Paisley extended her hands in an attitude of melodramatic benediction.

"As you take so deep an interest in all that concerns me, Mrs. Paisley," said Olive, in a tone of the deepest scorn, "I will save you the trouble of further spying and eavesdropping by telling you that I—I—have no intention of marrying Mr. Wilding—or—or—anybody at all."

"My darling!"

"My life will be devoted to another purpose, to the fulfilment of my father's trust, and to the tracking down of those who have brought misery, disgrace, and ruin upon one of the happiest homes in England."

"You talk like a detective policeman, Olive," answered the other, with an attempt at a laugh.

"I will act like one."

"When you have tracked the villain to his lair—when you have unmasked the traitor, and laid hands upon the destroyer of your happiness—what then?"

Mrs. Paisley asked this question in somewhat of an uneasy tone, though she strove to make it as easy and jaunty as usual.

"That will be a matter between that person and myself," Olive retorted, looking her visitor full and steadily in the face.

Then she turned, and crossed the lawn to the house, leaving Mrs. Greville Paisley still standing by the garden bench in an attitude of meditation.

(To be continued.)

DR. LIVINGSTONE'S movements were discussed at the last meeting of the Royal Geographical Society. Recent information leads the traveller's friends to hope that he would reach Zansibar in the course of last month, in which case he may arrive in England before the end of June.

REVACCINATION IN THE NAVY.—We understand that orders have been issued for the vaccination of all boys and cadets in Her Majesty's vessels. It has been before remarked upon the omission of this precaution in the navy, and we hope that its introduction during the present epidemic of small-pox will lead to the practice of revaccination of all classes entering that service, as has been the invariable rule for some years past in the army.

LORD ST. LEONARDS.—In spite of the repeated false rumours of the death of Lord St. Leonards which have been spread from time to time, his lordship completed his 90th year on February 12th, having been born in the parish of St. James, Piccadilly, on the 12th of February, 1781. Lord St. Leonards has been the "Father" of the House of Peers ever since the death of Lord Onslow in October last; and it is probable, as he was called to the bar some sixty-four years ago, that he is also the "Father" of the legal profession. Be this, however, as it may, he still enjoys the use of all his faculties, and it is said that he continues to read, mark, and digest regularly the reports of all the important cases which come before the Law Courts, and to annotate them with marginal remarks of his own, his handwriting being as firm and regular as ever.

LUMBER TRADE IN THE UPPER MISSISSIPPI.—The logs cut last winter measured, in round numbers, 100,000,000ft., or 20 per cent. less than the yield of the previous year. The stock on hand at the commencement of the season was 30,000,000ft., about the usual quantity. The St. Anthony manufacture accounted for 110,000,000ft., 15,000,000ft. were sent to market by river, and the balance not stacked was sold in Minnesota and Iowa. On the St. Croix and its tributaries 73,700,000ft. were cut, and this large figure is 40 per cent. below the production of 1868-69. With stock on hand 75,000,000ft. old logs, the total at the commencement of the manufacturing season was nearly 150,000,000ft. Of this amount 40,000,000ft. were unattainable in the pine-ries; 75,000,000ft. were manufactured on the St. Croix, and at Hastings, Redwing, and Lake City, and the balance, 33,000,000ft., left for exportation. At Black River the logs scaled exceed those of the Upper Mississippi and its tributaries by more than 30,000,000ft. The Black River is thus at the head of all the districts on the Mississippi River.

INDIAN RAILWAY.—On New Year's Day Lord Mayo opened the Goolundo Extension of the Eastern Bengal Railway, which supplies the great missing link in the chain of railway communication between Calcutta and Eastern Bengal. The extension has been some five years in course of construction, having to cross the Goria River, the deep and treacherous stream which carries off to the sea the main body of the waters of the Ganges, an obstacle requiring no small labour to overcome. The Goria Bridge roadway is laid across transverse girders, resting on seven pairs of cylinders, having to bear the pressure of a volume of water some 90ft. deep, and which have consequently been sunk in the bed of the river for a distance equal to about two-thirds of their height above it. There are eight spans, each about 180ft. long, and seven longitudinal girders on each side, each weighing 160 tons. The extreme length of the bridge is 1,600ft.

THE CAMPHOR TREE.—The Camphor-tree, *Dryobalanops camphora*, is one of the most interesting and important trees of Sumatra. This camphor attracted the attention of the earliest voyagers, and was then, as it is now, an important article of commerce with China and Japan, the people of those countries attributing to its extraordinary virtues, and paying a high price for it. The tree grows to a height of 100 or 130 feet, and forms a trunk 7 to 10 feet in diameter. The quantity of camphor contained in the trunks is very unequal; the young trees appear to contain little or none. It is said that, on an average, about nine trees are required to produce 100 lbs. weight of crystallised camphor. It is obtained by cutting down the tree and dividing the wood into small pieces, in the divisions of which the camphor is found. It differs in the form of its crystals from the camphor of commerce, is harder, more brittle, and does not so readily condense. Great quantities are used by the Bataks for the preservation of the corpses of their chiefs. The trees are spread over a portion only of Sumatra and Borneo, and generally occur in localities into which commerce and civilisation have as yet but little

penetrated. Notwithstanding the continued destruction of the trees for the sake of procuring the camphor, no means are taken for the future preservation of the species. This camphor is seldom seen in this country, except in museums. The Chinese eagerly buy it in preference to the ordinary camphor—their own produce—which they send in such large quantities into the European markets.

SCIENCE.

THE COLOURED PROMINENCES OF THE SUN.—The coloured prominences are masses of gas glowing with the intensity of heat. Those vast and seemingly stable protuberances, so enormous that ten globes like our earth placed one upon the other on the sun's surface would not reach their summit, are flames of hydrogen, that familiar element which constitutes so large a proportion of our ordinary gas flames—or rather they are not strictly flames of hydrogen, but whorls of the gas heated in an intense degree of brightness. Other vapours are also present in these vast glowing masses.

OUR SMALL ARM AND AMMUNITION TRADE.—The exports of small arms, as might have been anticipated during a time of war, were larger in January by 116,213, than in the corresponding month of last year. Manufacturers do not, however, get the benefit of the information which the Government themselves must possess as to the countries to which these goods have been sent. Why the information should be withheld it is difficult to see, especially remembering that if the returns are of service to any one they are of service to the manufacturer, who would desire above all things to be informed upon the parts of the world to which goods as a whole are going; thus they are made aware of the trade that is being done by other manufacturers as well as themselves. Ammunition is set down at an increase upon last year of nearly 100,000; nor have we here either any return as to our customers. The total value of the small arms sent out in January this year was 137,610l., against 21,397l. a year ago. The ammunition exported last year was worth 136,329l., against 37,368l.

IMPROVED GUN CARRIAGE.—A modification of Captain Moncrieff's gun carriage was recently tried at the Royal Arsenal proof butts, Woolwich. It is similar in principle to the recently adopted Moncrieff carriage for barbette batteries; but the system has been very much simplified and improved by the carriage itself being dispensed with, and the trunnions of the gun placed in the elevator, at the other end of which is the counterpoise, which raises it to the firing position above the battery. The trials made were of a preliminary character, the only spectators being Captain Moncrieff and a few friends; but though the mechanism was in a crude state, and one part of the gear had been damaged in removal from the factory, the result of the experiments was amply satisfactory. The carriage tried was that adapted to the 7-in. breech-loading gun; and as the ordinary wooden bed of a siege-gun carriage is used for the elevator to work in, the principle is described as a conversion of the service system. The cost of manufacture has been greatly diminished by the abolition of the iron carriage, the value of the apparatus used being only 150l., while those hitherto manufactured for the 10 and 12-in. guns have cost from 800l. to 1,000l. each.

NEW BANKERS' CHEQUE.—An ingenious mode of preventing the fraudulent alteration of cheques and other similar documents has been invented by Mr. J. B. Newton. The slip of paper upon which the blank cheque, or other form of mercantile undertaking or order for the payment of money is printed, is furnished with a table of digits, arranged in vertical columns, and for convenience described by perpendicular and horizontal lines forming squares. Over the top of each column is marked the denomination which the column is designed to represent, commencing with units and ending with 10,000, or any higher denomination. If the cheque or other money security is filled up with a sum under ten pounds, the figure in the column of units corresponding with the number of pounds is to be punched out, and the cheque is to be torn from the book and put into circulation with only that single column attached. If the cheque be filled with any sum under one hundred pounds, as, for example, with the sum of 69l., the number six in the column of tens, and the number nine in the column of units, are to be punched out, and the cheque issued with only the two columns representing tens and units attached. The falsification of a cheque made upon this principle would, no doubt, be difficult, but the process appears rather a complicated one to use in an office of business.

WHAT WATER CONTAINS.

We sometimes find in water organic matter derived from the decay of vegetables and certain

gases, oxygen and nitrogen—in other words, air; but the air which is dissolved in water is richer in oxygen than the atmosphere. This seems to be a wonderful provision of nature for the support of those animals that breathe by the means of gills. Fishes derive their oxygen from this gas, which is dissolved in water; and, although its volume is only one twenty-fifth the volume of the water, still the supply is sufficient to support this animal life. In wells we have also nitrates and ammonia salts, produced by the decomposition of animal matter in the soil round our dwellings.

We get an approximate idea of the quality of spring water by the density of the precipitates contained in it. Pond, lake, and river water is partly supplied by springs and partly by water which has simply passed over the surface of the earth, and not through the porous strata. Consequently this water is purer, generally, than spring water. Some of the purest waters that are known are lake waters. There is a lake in Sweden the water of which is found to contain only one twentieth of a grain of impurity in a gallon. Water which is in motion, as river water, often contains suspended impurities, or mud, which it has no opportunity of depositing; but when the stream becomes quiet, the mud is deposited, and the water becomes clear. By the Ganges, 3,663,000 cubic feet, of earthy matter are carried annually to the ocean.

The waters from our rivers and lakes, on reaching the ocean, evaporate, leave their saline matters behind, and come back in the form of rain or snow; and every time the water makes its journey to the ocean, it carries with it its little cargo of matter, and in this way the ocean becomes salt. It might be supposed on this account that the ocean would become much more salt in time; but the ratio between the quantity of water in the rivers and the quantity of water which is existing in the ocean, is such that the change must proceed very slowly. It is estimated that thirty-six cubic miles of water flow into the ocean every day, but it would take 30,000 years for all the water in the ocean to make the round once, to go back to the land, and bring its cargo of saline matter. Supposing that each gallon of river water which comes to the ocean bring six grains of impurity with it, it would take 36,000 years for it to be increased in the ratio of six grains to the gallon. The probability is that the solution of saline matter took place much more rapidly in former ages than it does now. It is pretty nearly washed out of its dust now, and carried to the ocean. Inland seas which receive rivers of a considerable size, and at the same time have no outlet, become much more concentrated than sea water, owing to the evaporation. We have saline waters in which common salt predominates, from some of the most remarkable of which enormous quantities of salt are manufactured. Nine million bushels have been manufactured from certain wells in a single year, the impurity consisting, in this case, almost entirely of salt.

Where water is used for washing, as in woollen mills, in dyeing, etc., it is extremely important that it should be comparatively pure. Various methods have been resorted to for its purification. For domestic purposes, the water of hill-sides is always the best. Wells are objectionable, as they serve to collect what soaks from the soil, and in these waters nitric acid and decomposed animal substances are almost always found. It is found that the waters of artesian wells contain no oxygen. To make these waters useful they must be brought into contact with the air. River and lake waters are preferable for town supplies. As to the characteristics of good water, first, it should be of low temperature, not over forty-eight or fifty degrees; it should be free from taste, except, perhaps, a slight saline taste, and a slight pungency from the presence of carbonic acid. Transparency is not so important, as water may be considerably coloured, and yet be free from injurious ingredients. It is not so much in the quantity of impurity as the quality. Five or six grains of lime or magnesia in water render it unfit for cooking. For tea and coffee, however, it is found to be an advantage to have a small quantity of lime in the water. A person of delicate taste can detect the presence of lime salts in water when it exists in the proportion of only two grains to the gallon.

The evil from which we are most likely to suffer is from impregnation of the water from lead. There is hardly any kind of water but has some effect upon lead. Pure distilled water attacks it rapidly; water containing some lime salts attacks it less rapidly. Impure water has but little effect upon lead, but with purer water we are in some danger of its contamination. Several other materials have been suggested as a substitute for lead pipe. Galvanised iron pipes are open to some objections. Glass pipe has been suggested, but the inconvenience of introducing it is a serious objection. The best pipe is that made of tin, surrounded by lead, the water being entirely protected from the lead.



[VERSE AFTER VERSE OF "CHILDE HAROLD" SHE READ.]

THE RIVAL GEMS.

CHAPTER IV.

She loves—but knows not whom she loves,
Nor what his race, nor whence he came;
Like one who meets, in Indian groves,
A beauteous bird without a name.

Moore.

FORTY-EIGHT hours quickly winged their flight after the interview recorded in our last, and night drew her sable shroud around the great city.

It was the hour of eight, and the well-appointed parlour of a small house, which stood at a short distance from the street, contained a single person—a young woman lovelier than the poet-artist's wildest dream. Her age could not have exceeded eighteen, and her regal-looking form was a few inches above the medium height. Her skin was white as the lily's leaf, marked by no paint or rouge of any sort. She owned a wild wealth of golden hair, which, combed back, and secured by a band of white gauze, displayed a high and exceedingly beautiful forehead. Her blue eyes rested far beneath lustrous auburn lashes, and gave her a voluptuous, oriental expression. She wore no valuable ornaments, save a necklace of jewels, which tried to rival the beauty of the matchless neck it encircled.

She was clad in a white and heavily flounced dress, and her step was as proud and queenly as that of Antony's royal love.

She stood before the large oval mirror which adorned the walls of the room, gazing upon the reflection of her beauty. The lamp stood on the little book-table behind her, and threw its mellow light upon the polished glass.

For some moments the beauty, whom one could have told at a glance had first seen the glorious god of day in the sunny south, was not disturbed in her whole-souled admiration of herself. Now and then a hair, or perhaps two, strayed from their golden companions, and tried to reach a pair of coral lips. But with her white hand she would return them to their places, and seal them there with a kiss carried from her lips.

Suddenly the knob of the door was turned, and the young girl sprang from the mirror and threw herself in confusion on the sofa.

Slowly then the door opened, and a tall woman, robed from head to foot in the deepest black, entered the room. Her form and habiliments could not be forgotten by any who had once seen them. She it was who had appeared to and conversed with Vincent Anderson, the attorney, and Opal, the possessor of River View.

Her face was not hidden by the veil, for now she did not need its shield.

She might have been fifty years of age. Her features, which still retained traces of former beauty, proclaimed her younger, but her hair, thickly streaked with silver threads, told that she carried those traces only as memorials of a time long gone by. The expression of her countenance was sad; but there lurked a determined gleam in her dark eye.

Could the reader have seen that face as the young girl saw it as she reclined on the sofa he would have said: "That woman has been wronged!"

"Well," said the young girl, looking up into the unveiled face, "he has not arrived yet."

"No," was the reply, in a deep voice. "'Tis but eight. The train does not reach London till half-past the hour. I am going up to my room; call me, Ruby, when he comes. My poor head aches terribly," and she pressed her forehead with one of her hands.

"I wish this conflict of man against woman were over—that the demon vengeance were satiated. I could die then, Ruby, and I believe I would rest peacefully in my grave. Now do not fail to call me when he comes; for he may bring important news."

The beauty told her that she would not fail to do her bidding, then the sombre clad woman left the room.

"I wish I could love as you hate," said the girl, looking after her. "Leoni says I am too passionate, and that my love is a devouring flame. I feel that he speaks the truth; but who could not love him with the intensest love that ever burned in woman's heart? Well, as I must linger here another half-hour, and alone, I will read. What shall I read? What but Byron, impassioned Byron, my poet—the poet of the fiery heart!"

She rose, took a magnificently bound volume from the centre table, and soon became lost to everything save the tender sentiments of the great Byron.

Verse after verse of "Childe Harold" she read, until she was interrupted by a step in the hall, into which the door of the parlour opened.

"'Tis he!" she cried, hurriedly closing the book, and casting a rapid, anxious glance at the door. "He—Leoni—my Leoni!"

The Italian name still shook her lips when the door opened, and she sprang forward, holding out her hands, with a cry of delight.

A young man stepped across the threshold, and clasped her little hands in his.

His features were faultlessly moulded, and beautiful to behold. They were decidedly Italian. His hair was dark, as were the pair of penetrating eyes, and the handsome moustache would have captivated many a fair one's heart. He was rather above the

medium height, straight as an arrow, and twenty-six years old. He was dressed like a gentleman, and he walked with the air of one born to command.

"So you have come at last, Leoni," said Ruby, blushing under the kiss he bestowed as she led him towards the sofa. "I was almost tired of waiting, and—"

"Where is she?" he suddenly interrupted, glancing around the room.

"In her room. I promised to call her when you came, Leoni; but I suppose she can wait awhile. What news do you bring from our future home—any?"

The Genoese laughed.

"Our future home," he cried. "That's an improvement on unadjectived River View. Why, you speak as though you were sure of possessing it, Ruby, my gem."

"I am sure of possessing it," she said. "Have not we laid our plans with caution? We know no such word as 'fail.' I erased it from my dictionary—see!" and she drew from beneath a rich pillow a little dictionary, and proved the truth of her words. With her tiny knife she had erased "fail," and its definition.

"Well, there's no news of importance from 'our future home,'" he said, smiling at his emphasis. "She, your guardian, has told you about her interview with Opal, and about hers with her uncle, which I overheard, hidden among the snowball bushes. My apartment is directly above his. He often rises and walks his room at the dead hour of midnight. He is anxious to hear from Anderson, the lawyer. Ruby, you must impress the attorney with your cause. He half believes it already. You must cry a little while relating it. Tears—a woman's especially—accomplish great things. They saved Rome once."

As he paused the black-robed woman crept into the room.

She greeted the Genoese, drew a chair near the sofa, and he said to her:

"I was telling Ruby how she could carry the day with the lawyer. Tears, I said, go a great way."

"Yes," said the woman, in her deep voice. "But they did not affect him. He has a heart of stone; but I will move it yet."

The words were couched with great determination, and the speaker clenched her hands.

"I will call on Mr. Anderson to-morrow night," said the young girl, "and ere I leave he shall desert Arnold Travers and espouse my cause. I wish we were ready to strike. I want to see you revenged." She looked at the woman. "I want to—"

She suddenly paused, and gazed into the dark eyes of the Genoese.

"Yes, you want to become my wife," he said, boldly; "and I want to call you mine. But the time is coming, Ruby, and at this hour is not far distant. Victory waits to crown our efforts."

"But the device?" suddenly cried the woman.

"I shall get it to-morrow night," said the Genoese, "and when I come again the operation shall be performed. I have engaged a man who understands the art, and who can keep a secret for money. Ruby, you will not sink under the operation?" and he smiled.

"I will do anything for River View," she said, then whispered what none but he heard, "and you, Leoni."

Half an hour later the woman left Ruby alone with her lover, and sought her chamber and couch.

Oh, what passionate words and promises the Genoese poured into the willing ears of that ambitious girl!

The midnight tones of the clock found them still seated together in that little parlour.

CHAPTER V.

Treason is but trusted like the fox;
Who, no'er so tame, so glibly'd, and lock'd up,
Will have a wild trick of his ancestors.

1 Henry IV.

"I wish that some lazy lubber would try to take the boat to-night."

Thus spoke the tall man servant of River View, the third night following the last recorded scenes.

He stood in the porch of the mansion which looked upon the garden. He was engaged in loading a revolver of the largest pattern.

It seems that certain parties had, of late, during the light nights, been in the habit of opening the boat-house with skeleton keys, purloining the boats, and enjoying a moonlight sail on the river.

Arnold Travers smiled at these depredations until the boats were returned badly damaged. The morning succeeding the night of which we are writing he requested Caleb to watch the boat-house, and summarily punish the depredators should they make their appearance. Without the knowledge of his master, Caleb Stab had possessed himself of a revolver, which he, being rather a rash man, would use without giving any one notice of his warlike intentions.

"There, she's loaded," he exclaimed, stepping down from the porch. "Now let one of them 'ere fellows show his ugly face, an' e'll git the contents of this 'ere revolver."

He walked towards the garden, carrying the dangerous weapon in his hand.

He had reached the farther edge of the garden. Opening the gate, he passed through, and stepped upon the path which led to the boat-house.

He ceased to commune aloud to himself, but hummed a stirring song of the days of his grandfathers.

The night air was exceedingly damp, and the gentle breeze had changed into a wind. Overhead huge masses of clouds pushed one another before the face of the watery moon. The boughs of the trees which grew near the boat-house bent continually beneath the wind, and creaked dismally.

"It's a awful moody place jist in this 'ere partic'lar spot. But ghosts or no ghosts, I'm going to remain," said Caleb, referring to the tale which had got abroad that the boat-house was haunted. "So I'll jist set down here an' make myself at home."

He threw himself upon the seat beneath the porch, and watched the clouds flit like monstrous phantoms before the orb of night.

He thus contented himself for perhaps an hour when the form of a man, who had come down the path, suddenly obstructed his vision.

Caleb did not spring to his feet as many in his situation would have done, but quietly cocked his revolver, and shrank back into a deeper shade.

For some moments the man stood alone, without advancing or retreating. Then he was joined by a woman, who came from towards the river, and he grasped her hands.

Caleb surveyed the meeting with astonishment.

"This beats all," he muttered, in a low tone. "There stands that 'ere Garbrashi, Mr. Travers's private secretary; but who's that with 'im?"

The woman was clad in black, and Caleb knew that he saw her for the first time.

He listened, for he knew that they were conversing, but the high wind only blew disconnected sentences to his ears.

By-and-bye he heard the woman say:

"You got—papers—I suppose?"

Then he saw the secretary draw an envelope from an inner pocket and hand it to the woman, who wore a veil.

"The device—in there," Caleb heard him say as he tendered the package. "But—letters I—not find—do better next time."

At last the wind lulled, but not until the couple were about to separate.

"Do not fail to get the letters," the woman said. "I must have them. Perhaps his desk has secret compartments. Ruby is growing impatient. I hope she will find the lawyer at home the next time she calls. She repeated her made-up story to-day, and she does admirably. She will persuade him. Each succeeding day I am more sanguine of success. We cannot fail; 'tis impossible."

Then the secretary said:
"Failure is not to be thought of. Do not let it disturb you. I will be down to-morrow night, then the operation, which will greatly strengthen our cause, will be performed."

A moment later the Englishman saw them separate. Garbrashi hurried towards the house, and the woman retreated towards the river.

"That's a pretty plottin' couple, ain't it?" said Caleb, rising. "Now, some people say that I'm dull of apprehension, but, lass my hat! if I can't see through that talk. I'll jist put things together. T'other day, bright and early, Mr. Anderson came here. He never came so early before. The other night, 'bout nine o'clock, that Italian was out in the yard. Opal was a cryin' yesterday. Well, what does it all amount to? Jist this. Somethin's come about, an' that 'ere somethin' is that some mean people's goin' to try to take Opal's property from her, an' that Italian's a helpin' 'em. He's their spy, an' he's stole somethin' from Mr. Travers's desk. From what I caught, I bet they've got a gal in London that will swear that she's Washington Travers's gal, an' that Opal is somebody else's. But I'm goin' to circumvent 'em. I know that them 'ere Italians is sharp, but if an Englishman can't beat that Garbrashi it is very odd."

After having thus pitted England against the cunning of the Italian, Caleb left the boat-house. He was satisfied that no person would disturb the boats that night.

"I'll go an' wake Opal, an' tell her what I've heard," he murmured, ascending the stairs.

Presently his hand touched the handle of Opal's door.

"No, I'll not tell 'er," he said, suddenly forming another resolution. "Nor Mr. Travers either. He'd turn the Italian feller off, an' I'll want 'im where he is. No, I'll tell nobody. I'll beat every one of them."

He turned, cautiously descended the stairs, and quietly sought his own room.

CHAPTER VI.

Naught so ill
As the betrayer's sin, Salvatorius
Almost. Futus.

THE first streaks of dawn that followed the night of wind and of the meeting at the boat-house found Arnold Travers astir.

His countenance proclaimed that he had passed a restless night, that something of great import still troubled his breast. After donning his clothes, he unlocked his desk, and rummaged among the contents of the pigeon-holes.

While he is thus engaged let us glance at his past history, which can be told in a few brief paragraphs.

He was, at the period of which we write, the only living child of his dead father, who had three children—sons. He did not promise to fulfil the desires of his father, for he entered a reckless youth. He resisted all parental entreaties to marry and give up his dissipated life, until he reached his twenty-fourth year, when, after a short courtship, he married Agnes Millwood, a fascinating young lady, five years his junior.

He had not enjoyed five years of wedded life when one night he saw her in the garden with a young man, and an hour after the sight had burst upon his eyes he spurned her kneeling form from his presence. With curses, he drowned the explanation she tried to offer, and in the heat of his anger he drove her from his house.

She left at his command, and two years later he discovered that he had been mistaken, that her garden companion was her brother, who was flying from the talons of the law, and whom she had concealed. Filled with remorse, he left his house to search for his wronged wife.

One day he learnt that she whom he sought was no more. Several days previous to his visit a strange woman died in an hotel, and beneath her pillow was a letter stating who she had been. The repentant husband secured the epistle, and recognised his wife's chirography.

Over her grave he called to her to forgive him, and, upon his return, he took up his residence with his brother, Maurice.

A short time after his return his brother died, leaving him the guardian of a babe, who, one week later, was abducted.

Of his life subsequent to the abduction, and prior to the opening of our romance, the reader already knows what is necessary.

For some minutes Arnold Travers examined the contents of the pigeon-holes in silence, when he very suddenly rose to his feet.

"Yes, yes," he cried, "those papers have been tampered with! The duplicate of my brother's will has been placed in the wrong receptacle; but not by my hands—no, not by mine."

Then he opened the door, and stepped to the foot of the stairs.

"Leoni!" he called.

"Here!" was the response, in a clear voice, and directly the Genoese, in dressing-gown and slippers, appeared at the head of the stairs. "What is wanting?" he asked, quite innocently.

"Come down to the library."

"Just as I am?"

"Yes," said Travers, quickly and impatiently. "I cannot wait. I want to speak to you."

The secretary followed Travers into the library.

"Well, Mr. Travers, what is it?" asked the young man, feigning great surprise at being summoned so early into the presence of his employer.

"My papers have been tampered with," said Travers, indignantly.

"Impossible!" exclaimed the Genoese.

"I speak the sober truth. I noticed it myself, while overlooking them."

"Have any been purloined?"

"None, I believe," was the reply.

"What documents have been disturbed? Important ones?" asked the secretary.

"Yes. The duplicate of my brother's will, with the letter containing the device which is on Opal's arm, and proves her, beyond cavil, the owner of River View."

"Indeed! This is an outrage. Mr. Travers, and in one's own house, too!" cried Garbrashi. "You speak as though Opal's claims to this beautiful mansion are disputed."

"They are."

"What?"

"They are disputed, I say," repeated Travers.

"Sit in that chair, Leoni, and I will tell you what I know of a deep plot which now exists. I am in need of a shrewd confidant, and I believe that you are the person."

The Genoese, assuming an air of wonderment, seated himself in the chair near the desk, and told Travers to proceed.

The narrative which followed occupied an entire hour. Travers drew a vivid picture of his reckless life, his marriage, the separation, his prayers at his wife's grave, his brother's death, the stolen child, his thrilling search for her and her recovery, and, finally, of the appearance of the veiled woman and her protégée on the stage of life.

"Now you want to know who I think has tampered with your papers?" said Leoni, breaking the silence which followed the conclusion of the narrative.

"I do; but first I want to know if you will be faithful to me, if you will keep the secrets I have told you, and if you will assist me in the coming battle?"

Arnold Travers gazed straight into his secretary's eyes as he spoke, but Garbrashi did not flinch.

"I will do all," he said.

"Swear it!" cried Travers. "I must have an oath!"

"The book, then, the book!" exclaimed Garbrashi, rising.

Travers placed the Bible before the Genoese, who

kissed its sacred cover, and swore an oath of unswerving fidelity.

Arnold Travers was satisfied.

"Now, who has handled the papers?" he asked.

"Arnold Travers."

"Me!" he cried. "Leoni Garbrashi, you are crazy!"

"I am sane," was the calm reply. "Mr. Travers, you are a somnambulist. I have seen you walking in your garden at midnight under the horrible influence of a somnambulist fit. In that condition you handled your own papers. Reflect; no one carries the keys of this room but yourself, and look, the locks are sound."

Arnold Travers reflected. He was a somnambulist; and Garbrashi's reasoning was plausible.

"I believe you, Leoni," he said, at last. "You have removed a great burden from my mind. Already I have found you of great assistance. Now, please leave me; I want to be alone. I shall soon seek your advice regarding the coming battle."

"I shall be happy to assist you," said Garbrashi, and the next moment he had vanished from the room.

At the head of the stairs he paused, and looked towards the library with a sneer, then he sprang into his room, and the door closed behind him.

(To be continued.)

A HANDSOME suite of ornaments has been finished by Messrs. Sanderson and Son, Prince's Street, Edinburgh, as a gift from the Scotch servants and

tenantry at Balmoral to Her Royal Highness the Princess Louise. The gift consists of a necklet pendant, and ear-rings, containing thirty-five fine Scotch pearls, beautifully matched, and of rare size and orient, mounted in 18-carat gold.

ADULTERATED PORT.

If the genuine article be so bad, it is plain that it is more easy to imitate port than any other wine; and there is no doubt that this imitation is extensively practised both in the south of France and in this country. Here is a receipt said to be used in the south of France: Calabre, 50 gallons; moist sugar, 3lbs. 4oz.; cashee, 2½ drachms; cardamums, 5 drachms; lime flowers, 18 drachms; logwood extract, a sufficiency. The following are said to be used by the manufacturers of genuine fruity port in this country: Rough cider, 4 gallons; elderberry juice, 1 gallon; logwood in chips, 4oz.; rhatany root, 1lb.; British brandy, 3 quarts. Or, for a better quality: Cider, 26 gallons; port wine, 4 gallons; elderberry juice, 6 gallons; brandy, 6 quarts; logwood, 1lb.; American fainglass, 12oz. In a work specially circulated among the trade, the enterprising publican is thus taught to make 8 gallons of real port into 60 gallons of the "fruity" compound: "Take eight gallons of good port wine, and put it in a clean 60-gallon cask, first fumed with sulphur. Add to it 40 gallons of cider, and then 12 gallons of British brandy. Add juice of aloe and elder till it acquires the proper degree of roughness, and then cochineal till it communicates a fine brilliant colour. In lieu of cider you may use turnip juice."

Having thus looked into the mode of manufacturing port for the British market, let us see in what state it reaches the consumer, and, as the best means of doing so, we present our readers with the following analyses: 1. Analysis of a sample of genuine port: Alcohol, 14.220; volatile acids, .071; fixed acids, .577; cream of tartar, .016; tartrate of lime, .070; sugar, 2.540; sugar added as an adulterant, none; extractive matter, 2.666; mineral matter, .211; water, 76.029; total, 100.000.

2. Analysis of Five Samples of Wine purchased in London.

	No. 1.	No. 2.	No. 3.	No. 4.	No. 5.
Alcohol	14.500	14.400	13.180	13.720	15.280
Volatile acids	.110	.149	.380	.351	.247
Fixed acids	.692	.710	.712	.441	.322
Cream of tartar	.021	trace	.021	trace	.010
Tartrate of lime	.086	.051	.042	.063	.051
Sugar	3.788	2.494	3.768	3.763	2.540
Sugar of Adulteration	none	.980	none	none	3.356
Extractive matter	2.197	1.263	6.700	5.622	4.479
Mineral	.296	.372	.337	.294	.342
Water	78.970	79.440	74.880	78.735	74.173

100.000 100.000 100.000 100.000 100.000

Phosphoric acid in ash 0.060 0.050 0.045 0.043 0.031. These results speak for themselves, and require no comment, seeing that out of the five samples two had been under the "doctor's" hands and one was fast turning sour, while none had the appearance and flavour of genuine fully fermented ports. All were, however, made on a grape base, and in that respect were really red wine. But four out of the five had been artificially coloured, as was proved by the isolation and examination of the dye stuffs employed.

THE QUEEN'S SPEECH AND POSTAL TELEGRAPHY.—The Queen's Speech was transmitted by postal telegraph to nearly 200 towns in the United Kingdom. The speech contained 1,790 words, that is, more than double the number of words contained in the speech of 1870. The transmission commenced immediately after the commencement of the delivery of the speech at 2.10 p.m. Opportunity was taken to test the powers of the various instruments employed by the Post Office for the transmission of messages. For the transmission to Brighton, Southampton, Portsmouth, and some other towns, the Morse printing instrument was employed. The transmission to Brighton was completed in 43½ minutes; the transmission to Southampton in 45 minutes. The operators in these two cases were females, and it is believed that the speed which they attained, of over 40 words per minute, is the greatest that has ever been obtained for an equal length of time on the Morse printer. As an experiment, the speech was transmitted to Liverpool by the Hughes Type Printing instrument, which prints its messages in ordinary Roman type. The speed attained was between 36 and 37 words per minute, and, as in working this instrument abbreviations are not used, the speed may be considered fully equal if not superior to the Morse, on which abbreviations are used. For the transmission to all the principal towns in the country the Wheatstone Automatic Transmitter was employed. Messages for transmission by this instrument are, it is well known, punched out on a separate instrument, the punched ribbon being afterwards passed through

the transmitter. By the employment of additional punchers at one end, and additional writers out at the other end, the preparation and writing out of the message are made to keep pace with the transmission. The speed attained varied with the length and quality of the wires employed. The highest speed attained was at Bradford, to which place the speech was sent at the rate of 94 words per minute. The speech, as transmitted by telegraph, was sold in Newcastle and Edinburgh at 3.45; in Dublin, at 3.47; in Glasgow, at 3.50; in Cork, at 4; in Jersey, with two transmissions, at 4; in Darlington, with two transmissions, at two minutes past 4; in Dundee, with two transmissions, at 4.20; in Belfast, with two transmissions, at 4.38; in Inverness, with two transmissions, at 4.40; and in the Isle of Man, with two transmissions, at 5 p.m. The length of the ribbon punched for the Wheatstone transmitter was upwards of 111 yards for a single copy of the message. This is the first occasion on which a message of this kind has been transmitted on the Wheatstone automatic instrument.

TRUFFLES.

THIS curious fungus has become an essential to the true gourmet. The "dindon aux truffes" has spread from the home of gastronomy—France, to many parts of Europe. The "pâté de foie gras," with its mixture of truffles, is now imported to all quarters of the globe, so that we need not be surprised to hear that the price of the esteemed esculent has nearly doubled. What ten years ago was only worth six francs the kilogramme now sells at fifteen francs. As in the case of other much-prized articles of food, such as oysters and lobsters, scientific men have turned their attention to the cultivation of this delicacy; and M. Auguste Rousseau, of Carpentras, has succeeded in obtaining a successful result. It has been observed that in the South of Europe the truffle grows the best among the roots of the oak tree, which is now cultivated in large districts, not only for its value as timber, but also for this mushroom, so dear to gastronomists. Beneath this tree it acquires a perfume which is wanting when it vegetates in the roots of the hornbeam, beech, walnut, chestnut, or lilac, under all of which it is occasionally found; and as many persons eat the truffle without exactly knowing what it is, a few details as to its peculiarities may not be without interest.

Instead of pushing its head through the grass, and dotting the green-sward with its pretty white circles, like our mushroom, it loves to hide from the light, and dwells entirely underground. The spores, or reproductive seeds, are in the interior, like those of the puff-balls, which grow to such an immense size in many parts of England. There are about twenty-one varieties of the tuber—the botanical name of the truffle; but of these there are only four which are valued as edibles, and are often confounded one with the other, and generally known as the black truffle. Two ripen in autumn, and are gathered at the beginning of winter; these are the black truffle, properly so called, and the winter truffle. The first, which is by far the most highly esteemed, is highly perfumed, and covered with little roughnesses. The interior tissue, of uniform black, is traversed by veins, which are white in an early stage, but grow red as growth advances. This kind is common in Italy, Provence, and Poitou; being occasionally, though rarely, found around Paris and in England. The winter truffle always grows in the same places, but it is very inferior in quality. The two other kinds are developed during the course of the hot season; the one is named the summer truffle, the other the mesenteric.

DISINTERESTEDNESS OF THE EMPRESS OF THE FRENCH.—Had not the Empress Eugénie been a woman of rare discretion, and more patriotism than selfishness, Chislehurst, instead of it being, as it is, a secluded and quiet retreat in fertile Kent, would at the present moment have been the centre of conspiracy and the hotbed of plots and machinations. Of Imperialists there are enough in England to have formed the nucleus of a strong secret organisation for promoting the interests of the Emperor, and taking means to re-impose his rule in France. These have by no means been backward in attempts to enlist the support of the Empress to schemes whose object was the restoration of her family to power; but disregarding alike entreaties and arguments, she has held herself aloof from intrigues, and resolved to take no step in politics until her country has got rid of its invaders. So retired, indeed, has she kept herself, that no signs whatever are visible in the neighbourhood of the residence within it of an illustrious personage, who but seven months ago held the proudest position in Europe. The life led by Her Majesty is of the simplest and most unostentatious kind; and even now that the crisis of the great struggle has been reached, and excitement more or less rules all counsels, perfect quiet prevails at Chislehurst. Uninterrupted and

almost unnoticed, the royal exile passes her days tranquilly, taking her accustomed daily walks, receiving few visitors, and bestowing all her cares upon her son, just as though the question of who is to be the future ruler of France were remote rather than immediate.

THE EARL'S SECRET.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Trust not the treason of those smiling looks,
Until you have their guileful trains well tried,
For they are liken unto golden hooks,
That from the foolish fish their baits do hide.

Spenser.

DAY after day went by, and every succeeding one strengthened her in this belief.

The only one about whom she had any doubts or fears was Lady Walsingham, who was every day growing more melancholy, and talked more than ever of her lost stepson, and grew so pale and thin that had her pretended daughter's heart been other than of stone, her conscience must have smote her as she looked upon that wistful, waxen face. But her conscience was soothed, her heart was adamant; every morning she leaned over the flowers, freshly culled, upon the mantelpiece in her ladyship's boudoir, and every time she did so a crystal drop was left to mingle with the water in the vase.

But it did not remain there long. Merton was on the watch. The steps of the beautiful supplanter never fell, however softly, upon the velvet carpet, that the vigilant maid did not hear them; her dress never rustled so low, but she caught its sound, and shuddered. Merton threw all the water away.

The little family at Silvermere was by no means a happy one.

The earl, always taciturn, morose, and heavy-hearted, had been, since his visit to the Highlands, unusually nervous and irritable, and seemed to dwell almost constantly in a sort of superstitious gloom. He showed more agitation than formerly whenever the countess spoke in his presence of the lost Rupert. He dreaded the approach of night, and retired to bed only to toss restlessly on his pillow, and dream of a ghostly visitant which, sleeping or waking, continually haunted him. Sometimes it was a boy, with auburn locks dripping slime, who looked at him mockingly, reproachfully; and sometimes, of late, he fancied a man, young, stalwart, and handsome, ever and anon came before him; the hair was auburn, too, though the slime was wanting, and the eyes of the man were always like those of the boy—a deep, dark blue.

A change was perceptible in Lady Valeria also. It was a fine thing to be universally admired by the first people of the county. It was something grand, dazzling, in her mind, to be looked up to as a being of a superior order by obsequious servants. But it was not so pleasant to pay the respect, even homage, which at the first she had felt called upon to give, at least in seeming, to the earl, and—as she began to discover that she was not without some influence with his lordship—to Lady Walsingham.

Accustomed from childhood to having her own way, she could not tamely submit for any great length of time to the will of others.

The earl was exacting. The more his superstitious mind brooded over the record of a particular leaf in the else unsullied book of his life, the more exacting he became. The remaining part had not, indeed, been altogether blameless, but this page seemed so dark in comparison that all else was looked upon as naught.

Now Lady Valeria was called upon to play and sing to him for hours together. Again, she must read aloud some book she abhorred, or drive with him to some part of the county where the scenery was anything but pleasant to her.

Thus they lived—those three.

One day the earl had been more than usually exacting. He had confined himself to the library, and to the music-room adjoining it, nearly the whole of the day, and insisted upon Lady Valeria staying with him. She read to him till her lungs gave out. Then he would have her play, and, as if not quite sufficiently diverted by that, she must also sing. All this when the air outside was deliciously cool and fragrant, and the birds were singing their sweetest.

The impatient girl allowed an angry scowl to distort her face, and his lordship saw it. He forgot himself and his gloomy thoughts at once, and, going to her side, he laid his hand on her dusky head with reawakened tenderness.

"I am unkind, my pet, in keeping you so close. Go take a walk in the garden or on the lawn; or, perhaps, you would prefer to have Selim brought round for a ride."

She did not rise from her seat, but turned round with her doleful countenance facing his lordship.

"Why, Valeria, my darling, how tired you look."

You are ready to sink, for want of rest, and I was thinking only of my own pleasure. Come, pet, don't be angry with poor papa. What shall I give you to call back your old, sweet smiles, that have been banished from your face so long? Now what shall it be? You shall have whatever you like."

She dropped her head on her hand a moment in thought. For what should she ask? Of dresses or jewels, strange to say, she did not think.

She lifted her face, all aglow, her eyes sparkling like diamonds.

"Well, now, tell me quick, what is it? What wonderful thing are you going to ask for?"

"Nothing but a ball, papa. A splendid ball here at Silvermere. Oh, I want it so much."

His lordship was quite taken aback by her request. He had expected nothing of the kind.

He bit his lip in perplexity and vexation; but Lady Valeria appeared not to notice his displeasure.

"Say yes, papa," she pleaded, prettily. "I want to make out the list to whom we will send invitations this very evening."

The earl looked serious as he said:

"We have never had a ball, Valeria, since your mother has been in her present grievous state. I fear it would not be agreeable to her, but if you want a ball, to transform these gloomy ancestral rooms into halls of mirth, why, Follard shall carry the invitations to-morrow."

Lady Valeria ran away, humming a lively air, to her boudoir, to write the invitations.

Just at nightfall, her task completed, she went to the rooms of the countess to inform her concerning the proposed ball.

She found the countess lying as pale as marble upon a silken lounge in her dressing-room, with Merton standing by, fanning her softly and steadily, and anon bathing her brow with perfumed ice water.

She turned as pale as her ladyship when she came in and saw her thus. She moved with hesitation towards the lounge.

"What is the matter with mamma?" she inquired, in an awed voice, scarcely above a whisper.

The maid answered, without raising her eyes to the white face of the girl standing beside her.

"It is her head. She has been ill all day."

"Is she asleep? I came to tell her something. We are going to have a grand ball here at Silvermere. Will not that be something for people to talk about? Papa has consented! The invitations are ready to be sent."

The wistful blue eyes of Lady Walsingham opened wide. She smiled, and seemed no longer to feel the pain that was racking her head.

"I knew it would be," she said, quietly. "I have dreamed about this grand ball so many times. Rupert will attend it. I sent an invitation to him last night by some one who stood by my bed, and told me he was alive and well. I hope I shall be quite well by that time."

The countess passed her hand slowly over her forehead.

"Is it not singular, Valeria, that I am so weak, and that my head pains me so strangely? Rupert must not find me thus. What do you suppose ails me?"

The false girl, at whom Merton shot another meaning glance, appeared not in the least confused by her ladyship's question. She stooped gracefully to pick up her handkerchief from the carpet, and answered:

"You are nervous, mamma, that is all. You will be well enough to-morrow, I daresay. You need quiet; so I will leave you in Merton's excellent care." She left her ladyship's apartments at once.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Now I will undrap a secret book,
And to your quick-conceiving discontents
I'll read you matter deep and dangerous.

1 Henry VI.

THE Persian summer-house, already alluded to in this story, was situated in a delightful spot near the river. It was the false Lady Valeria's favourite resort.

Three days after permission for the ball had been extorted from the earl, she was seated here enjoying the cool breeze which swept in from the sea, and the perfume of the flowers. Lord Walsingham had gone to London by the morning train, and was not expected to return before evening. It was now mid-afternoon. She had been seated here some time and alone.

"What an Eden I have gained!" she exclaimed, rapturously, as she clasped her hands in an ecstasy of delight. "It is more beautiful—ten times more than even my fancy painted it."

Her soliloquy was interrupted by her maid, who, with flurried face and excited manner, rushed into the summer-house, exclaiming:

"Oh, my lady, such a fearful thing has happened!"

Lady Valeria's cheek grew suddenly white.

"What is it?" she articulated, faintly. "What has happened?"

"There have been burglars in the house."

Lady Valeria sat down again, much relieved.

"Is that all?"

"All! why, my lady, isn't that dreadful enough?"

'Tis a wonder we weren't all murdered in our beds."

The girl shuddered.

"When did it happen? When were these burglars at Silvermere?"

"Some time ago, I think. The butler heard them in the library."

"In the library?"

Lady Valeria caught her breath as she repeated the words.

"Yes, my lady; they opened the great carved desk, and tore a cheque from the book, and put his lordship's name to it, and drew the money—a large amount—at the bank, and that is how his lordship found it out."

"What is papa going to do?"

She asked the question with perfect calmness.

"He is going to find out who forged the cheque if he can, to be sure."

"How do you know there was more than one burglar?"

"The butler heard them talking in the library, he is quite sure, but when he opened the door they were gone. His lordship is going to make inquiries. He has sent a summons to every one belonging to the house to meet him in the library at four."

Lady Valeria made no remark, but waved the little maid away with her hand.

"Yes; go all of you to Lord Walsingham's council," she murmured, "and much good it will do either you or him."

She laughed softly to herself.

"But," she started up, quickly, "I must hear what is said at this august assembly which is about to convene in his lordship's library. I must know what my gloomy papa thinks about this forgery. I must creep into the shadow of the honeysuckle by the bay window. There I can hear all the silly old butler has to say about the voices he heard in the library that night."

A few minutes passed, and a stooping figure moved swiftly, glidingly, along under the great windows, and presently Lady Valeria was seconed behind the vines which hung in festoons over a portion of the bay window.

As the clock struck four the earl, who had been for several minutes leaning over the open desk, comparing the torn edge of the cheque with that in the book, seated himself in a chair facing the window, outside of which the beautiful schemer was concealed. He had scarcely done so, when the door swung open and the servants, including the gardener, coachman, and grooms filed into the room, headed by the white-haired butler. Lord Walsingham at once stated the cause of their being assembled. He wished to know if any one beside the butler had, on a certain night which he named, heard or seen any person or persons, strangers or otherwise, about the house at a late hour. All answered at once in the negative, except a footman and one of the kitchen maids. These hung their heads, coloured, and appeared very much confused.

"What do you say, Briggs, and you, girl?" demanded his lordship.

Neither replied. The girl twirled her thumbs awkwardly, and the man bent his eyes on the carpet.

"Speak, both of you. Did you see or hear any one that night between the hours of twelve and one?"

"Yes, my lord," was the tardy reply of both.

"Well, so you admit that much. Now, will you go on and tell me about it?"

There was no answer. The face of the proud earl flushed angrily, while that of the girl outside stooping under the vines turned white, and the eyes bent upon the ground had a frightened look.

"You saw some one, did you?" his lordship interrogated.

Both replied in the affirmative.

"Very well; now do you know whom you saw?"

The footman answered that he did not know the man's name. He saw but one, though the butler averred that he heard two voices talking in the library just after midnight, while the girl acknowledged that she saw two persons going towards the library—one of whom, under his lordship's persistent questioning, she admitted she recognised. The other she declared she never saw before.

"Who was the one you know? Give the name at once, or you are discharged from my service. I want to bring the offenders to justice."

The deep colour of the girl's face faded to a grayish white.

"Your lordship will surely discharge me if I tell."

"I will not. Now out with it at once."

"I had the toothache, your lordship, and I got up and went down to the kitchen for a hot poultice. I went down the front way instead of by our own stairs. I stepped back into the passage when I saw them coming. I never saw such an evil, dark-faced man."

"Well; who was the man?"

"I didn't know him."

"Well, the other?"

The girl hung her head again in confusion.

The lady under the honeysuckle buried her nails in her soft palms, and held her breath.

"It was a woman, your lordship. She was wrapt up in a great mantle, but I saw her face, and knew her."

"A woman! It was not your sister, the laundress, I hope? If so," and the earl's eyes wandered in the direction of the laundress, "I will make it as light for her as possible, though she deserves transportation."

The kitchen-maid felt indignant. She raised her head with a quick movement, and blurted out:

"It was Lady Valeria I saw with the man."

Lord Walsingham turned of a purple hue. He glared at the girl as though his senses had suddenly left him, and she shrank behind her fellow-servants. The butler feared apoplexy for his master, and sprang to the table, where an ewer of water was standing.

When the earl spoke again it was in a constrained and unnatural voice.

"You may go to your duties. Every one except Briggs. He will remain here. Mind you, all, what this girl has said is not true, at least, with the construction she puts upon it. You are not to mention it outside the house if you value your places."

The servants, men and women, left the room.

Lord Walsingham addressed the footman in a tone that was meant to be devoid of anxiety.

"To think that the girl could suppose such a thing! Now, Briggs, you have permission to relate what you know."

The man hesitated and acted as though he did not know how to begin, and the earl was obliged to question him.

"You heard what the butler said about the noise and the voices he heard on a certain night in this room?"

The footman assented.

"You saw a strange man in the house that night?"

"No, my lord, I saw him coming into the house."

"Yet you said nothing about it? It was your duty to alarm the house at once."

"I was afraid to, my lord."

The earl ran his eyes over the man's compact form with a contemptuous glance as he asked:

"Why afraid? Did you fear personal harm?"

The footman straightened his back and lifted his head a little proudly.

"No, your lordship. The man, who had on a cloak, got into the house by climbing over the balcony and into Lady Valeria's apartments."

Lord Walsingham, as the man said this, sprang from his seat, and, seizing a cane, which he had brought into the room with him, he drew it up as though he would strike the offender down; but in an instant his manner changed, and the cane dropped at his side.

Lady Valeria—her eyes glowing evilly, her lips glued together—tried to leave her covert and get away, but all power of motion had forsaken her, she could not stir.

Lord Walsingham, no longer proudly erect, but stooping, said:

"Briggs, you will not mention this! Nothing is wrong so far as Lady Valeria is concerned, and so it will be proved in time; but not for anything must you tell your fellows what you have told me, and what no doubt is true, so far as you know. But you were deceived, very greatly deceived! There is a window which opens from the balcony into a room adjoining those belonging to my daughter. The man entered the house through that window. That is all I have to say to you."

The footman withdrew at once. Then Lord Walsingham dropped into his chair, and, bowing his head on his hands, he groaned aloud.

As he sat thus, Merton came down with a disturbed mien and stood in the doorway. She had not been summoned before the earl with the others. She coughed and rapped upon the door to make her presence known, but the distressed man heard her not. Then she advanced firmly and steadily into the room and stood beside him.

"I beg your pardon, Lord Walsingham," she said. "I have something on my mind which I think it is my duty to inform you of."

He looked up then, showing a face so full of humbled pride that the lady's maid pitied him.

"Well, what am I to hear now?"

"I know what you have already heard. It is ter-

rible; but this is worse, a great deal. Can you bear it?"

"Go on. Do not spare me."

The earl spoke hoarsely.

"I would spare you, but that in doing so I might be suffering another to go to her death. It is a dreadful tale to come to a father with, but you should know it. Lady Valeria seeks to poison her ladyship unto death."

The earl sprang up and seized the woman by the arm frantically.

"Impossible! You are all in a league to destroy my happiness utterly. Valeria is innocent."

A rustling as of leaves drew the attention of the pair to the open window.

Lady Valeria, furious with rage and fear, was rising from her place of concealment. She turned and looked into the room, then darted away.

That look was enough! No need now of Merton's offering to bring proof in the shape of the poisoned water to show she spoke truly. Lady Valeria had been hidden by the window listening. The once high-souled daughter of Lord Walsingham had descended so low as to become an eavesdropper. Surely this was enough.

His lordship groped his way back to his seat as one gropes in the dark. Merton started to leave him, but he signed to her to remain. She did so, but though he tried to speak to her, it was minutes before he could find his voice. It found vent at length in these bitter words:

"It is all true—all! Valeria, whom I so love, has robbed her father! She has committed forgery, and now she tries to murder her mother. Oh, that I should live to see this day!"

"You know what we think, what Doctor Lovejoy says of Lady Walsingham?" the earl went on, sadly, after a long pause, during which he had been in deep thought. "She has been a monomaniac for years as I believe, and I can only account for my daughter's conduct on the ground that her mind also is diseased. Watch her, but do not let her know that you do. As for myself, I hardly know what I ought to do. If she really means to kill her mother, and has heard all that has been said here this afternoon, she will try other and surer means, if not watched. Guard Lady Walsingham, keep Valeria from her as much as possible, and, above all, say nothing to any one of what you know. Be faithful to me and mine, and your salary is doubled for the future."

He turned away as he spoke, and Merton, knowing that he wished the interview at an end, left the room.

"I am getting my reward!" groaned the earl, when he was left alone. "My sin was committed for her—to make her the wealthiest heiress in the kingdom, and she turns out a thief! a forger! a would-be-murderess! Better that she had died before she left her nurse's arms, than to live for this! I was so proud of her! so wrapped up in her. Verily, my reward has come—come to crush me into my grave before my time!"

CHAPTER XXIX.

The heavy sigh,
The tear in the half-opening eye,
The pallid cheek and brow, confessed
That grief was busy in his breast. Scott.

THE earl remained in the library until dinner was announced. He ate but little of the food set before him. He gulped down a quantity of wine, and went out to walk on the terrace with bowed head, the most unhappy father in all England that night.

What was he to do? There was nothing he at length concluded that he could, under the circumstances, do better than to let the miserable girl go without rebuke and undisturbed, yet closely watched by Merton and himself.

Lady Valeria leaned out over the window-seat of one of the windows of her boudoir, and gazed down with eyes of fury upon the earl as he walked.

"Ah," thought she, "if it would only do, I would like to slip down to his side and whisper one woman's name in his ear, and tell him that all he can suffer cannot atone for the misery he meted out to her? But I must not, dare not do that now."

She got down from the window-seat, and walked backwards and forwards with hands folded over her heart. Her face grew sterner, her eyes resembled but slightly at that moment the melting orbs of her into whose place she had crept.

"Even if they should find me out," she whispered, hoarsely, to herself, "Lord Walsingham cannot turn me away from Silvermere a beggar, neither deliver me a prisoner up to justice. The secret my mother gave me on the deck of the 'Princess Charlotte' tells me that. Though he will never be any wiser concerning me than he is now, I must be prepared for the worst that might come. I must entice Lord Olney into proposing for my hand, then he must gain the consent of the old man down there on the ter-

race, and we will be married at once. The earl will dower me like a princess, in spite of what he thinks of me at present, and my Lord Olney and I will go to his estate in Kent. When the London season comes we will go to town, and between there and Olney Wold our time will be divided until this beautiful Silvermere is made mine by death; then Lady Olney will come here to live in the home of her ancestors."

With a low derisive laugh the beautiful supplanter left the room.

Morning came, and Lady Valeria was not summoned to meet the earl as she expected. Days passed away, and the night of the ball, which Lady Valeria had feared would not be suffered to take place, was at hand, still Lord Walsingham had said nothing to her of the terrible revelations he had received. She was almost persuaded to believe the scene in the library, with herself stooping beneath the honey-suckle to hear her condemnation, but a dream. Whether it was a dream or a reality, she no longer allowed herself to be disturbed by it, but shook off the clinging dread which had oppressed her, and was once more all gaiety.

The guests were beginning to arrive. Carriage after carriage rolled up the broad avenue. The folding-doors between the great drawing-rooms were thrown open. The various rooms were soon filled with the wealthy, the gay, the beautiful, but still they came to this grand ball—given, as every one assured his neighbour—in honour of the return of Lady Valeria from abroad.

Amid all the proud ladies, whose marvellous beauty made them conspicuous, Lady Valeria stood pre-eminent. A hundred pairs of bright eyes shone dazlingly, yet none were brighter than hers. She was dressed in a pale rose-coloured silk, which was her favourite colour. Costly jewels blazed in her raven hair, and on her neck and arms.

The eyes of the foppish Lord Olney followed her rapturously as she moved like a very queen amid the throng.

About the time that the first guest arrived at the Silvermere ball, the train from the north came rumbling into the station at the village, and a young man stepped lightly out upon the platform. It was Philip Monteith. He inquired concerning an inn where he can pass the night, and is directed to the "Hare and Hounds." He repairs thither at once, calls for a room and his supper. He is shown to a little sleeping-parlour over the tap-room, where he has only time to improve his toilette before his supper is served. The meal over, Philip is soon moving towards the stately mansion where he imagined were hearts aching sore for the sorrows of her whom he had known as Griselda.

It was now a week since he had left her to come on this mission to her father's house. Unavoidable business had detained him in Edinburgh much longer than he had expected, hence his haste, on reaching the village, to be driven at once to his destination.

The stable boy had got it into his head, though how we cannot say, that this unseasonable visit to Silvermere was intended for one of the servants, so, instead of following the broad carriage sweep, which led in a semicircle to the mansion, he turned his cab into a narrow way, which wound round to the rear of one of the wings, so that Philip saw neither the brilliantly lighted front of the house nor the illuminated lawn before it.

A knot of servants were chatting about the door, before which the fly halted. Philip alighted, and engaging the boy to wait for him, approached the men, inquiring for Lord Walsingham.

A footman left his fellows and advanced to meet the visitor, informing him that his lordship was engaged.

"But I must see him. My business is of the gravest importance."

"I will take your name to his lordship, sir."

"My name is unknown to him. Can you not conduct me to him?"

"His lordship will not be disturbed to-night," said the footman, turning away.

"But, my good man, I tell you again that I must see the earl, and that to-night."

Seeing his words were without effect, he added: "It is about his daughter, Lady Valeria, that I come. I have something of importance to communicate."

The footman turned quite round at once. It was Briggs. He was greatly wondering what new crime the miserable father must have laid to his idol's charge. The man at once signified his willingness to lead the young man to an unoccupied room, where his lordship would doubtless meet him.

Briggs felt that he might venture to be confidential with the handsome stranger. As he led him along hall and passage towards the front of the mansion, he took occasion to say, looking exceedingly wise:

"You won't say anything to my lord about my

lady's doing what she did to her poor ladyship? He is sore on that point, and my lady is crazy, maybe like her mother, or she wouldn't want to be a murderer."

Merton had not seen fit to comply with the earl's request that she would not mention what she had seen, and the attempted murder was freely discussed by the servants.

Philip staggered like a man who had received a stunning blow. Was Griselda then not innocent?

The footman rattled on, but Philip scarcely heard his words.

"That murder business and the forgery is all got over with now, or things wouldn't be going on as they are here to-night. Now you won't say anything to pain my lord?"

"I shall do my best to avoid wounding your master's feelings," returned Philip, warily.

"I'll take you into the little breakfast-parlour off the library. There is no one in there. I'll go and bring his lordship to see you at once."

As the footman spoke he led the way into the rear part of the long mosaic-floored hall on the left of which were the rooms filled with the guests, then along this towards a door at the right which opened into the breakfast-parlour.

Philip felt his poverty and lowliness at this moment more keenly than he had ever done before, and no wonder that he did so. He was treading the ancestral halls, rich and old and grand, of the girl he loved—for he did love her still, and he believed in her too, though the words of the footman, uttered a few minutes before, had made his faith waver for a moment.

How could he help contrasting this palatial residence with Sunset Cottage?—his own home, if he had one at all. He paused a moment to admire a rare flower. The footman paused also, saying:

"My lady being but lately come home, his lordship let her have her own way to-night, and flowers are as plenty as grass everywhere, though I fancy there's some hearts that don't beat light for all that."

The young man paid no attention to the footman's words, though he had occasion to recall them afterwards with bitterness of spirit.

They walked on, and passed near the foot of the staircase, down the softly carpeted steps of which a lady came, in robes of sheeny silk, with diamonds blazing at her throat and upon her fingers. Unconsciously Philip turned his eyes upon the lady.

"Her ladyship the countess!" whispered the footman, signing to Philip to hasten on.

"He has come, indeed! Gregory's boy has come at last!" exclaimed Lady Walsingham, wildly, either to herself or to Merton, who was close behind.

"Your ladyship!" interposed the maid, but before she could say more the countess had reached the foot of the staircase, and was rushing, with a yearning, eager face, towards Philip.

"Ah!" exclaimed she, in tearful accents, as he was following Briggs towards the breakfast-parlour. "You will not say I am forgiven! You will not even look at me! Oh, Rupert, Rupert! see what a miserable wreck of the woman who was once your father's wife and your stepmother I am. For your father's sake, forgive me! Heaven, I am sure, has forgiven me long since, for I never meant that wrong should triumph so long! I meant always that you should have your rights, and you shall! Will you not forgive me, Rupert?"

She had walked up to the bewildered young man, and was holding out both hands to him, those thin, wasted hands, once so matchless in form, so rosy and plump with health.

The footman stepped close to Philip, whispering low:

"Her ladyship is crazed, sir. Nobody minds what she says."

The countess repeated her question more sadly than before.

"Will you not forgive me, my poor, wronged boy?"

Philip smiled down into the pleading face. If her ladyship was, as the man had said, insane, it might be best to humour her whim.

He was about to speak to her, when a door near him swung open, displaying to his astonished gaze the most brilliant assembly it had ever been his lot to behold.

He was struck dumb with wonder and amazement. This, at Silvermere, where he supposed joy and mirth had been dead for a season!

"Can this be Silvermere?" he asked himself aloud.

"Yes, Rupert," the countess spoke, at once. "This is Silvermere. Isn't it a grand old place? But Haldimand is finer; and Haldimand is yours. Do you know what I have called you to myself these many years? I have written letters for you every where, calling you the lost heir of Haldimand, and telling this one and that one to send you home to me."

"I must have gone stark mad, I think!" exclaimed

Philip, wildly. "I must get into the free air once more before I lose all power of motion. Come, man, will you lead me back to the fly? I will call upon Lord Walsingham to-morrow."

The footman stared, but did not stir.

Philip cast his eyes about him, and, seeing a door near him which opened upon it, he darted through it. Here the full splendour of the scene upon the lawn met his gaze. More dazed than before, he walked along the verandah, until he came opposite the great double drawing-room, with its gay throng of beauty and fashion.

He paused involuntarily, and gazed through an open window. A lady, richly dressed, and with the carriage of a queen, was coming towards the window, leaning upon the arm of a gentleman. The pair were conversing in low, loving tones. The lady's head was bent down; he could not see her face. He knew he ought to go away, but something held him to the spot. He heard the lady say, sweetly:

"Yes, Lord Olney, I love you."

"Will you marry me?" questioned the gentleman.

"Gain papa's consent, dear Vincent, and I will."

Then the lady raised her eyes timidly to her lover's face, and that moment Philip sank weak as an infant upon the verandah.

"Griselda!" he groaned. "Griselda returned to Silvermere and happiness! Griselda the promised wife of another! Here in this gay throng she is the Lady Valeria, but to me she can be only Griselda; yet even not that any more! I look upon her face, mayhap, for the last time!"

Here Vincent, Lord Olney, left his newly betrothed, and went to another part of the room.

Philip arose quickly and impulsively, and drew near the lady unobserved.

"Griselda!" he breathed close at her side.

She turned a pale, startled face upon him. She saw only a perfect stranger; and of such she felt she had no cause to be afraid. So the look of alarm, which had crept so quickly into her face at the almost insidiously spoken name, gave place to a haughty look of scorn and anger, which stung the proud soul of Philip almost to madness. She gave him not so much as a word.

He saw Lord Olney approaching slowly.

"You will not even speak to me!" he said, bitterly, "though I came here at your bidding. You are no longer Griselda Lyell, as you bade me call you scarcely more than a week ago, but Lady Valeria Byerly; and I am still Philip Monteith; and so we part, in scorn on your part, in—no matter what—on mine."

The young man turned away, sprang from the verandah upon the smooth lawn, and, finding his way around the mansion to the fly, took his departure.

Lady Valeria was still standing by the window; Lord Olney was beside her, talking dispassionately; but she was not listening to his words. She was in deep thought. A new and unlooked-for peril menaced her. She was not slow to see how it was. The girl in her mother's keeping had not been closely enough guarded! She had found a lover. He had come to Silvermere in her behalf, and had naturally enough mistaken herself for the girl he loved, supposing that she had reached there from the place where Mrs. Lyell supposed she had her securely confined in advance of him. But he would discover his mistake, and fathom the very depths of her cunning plot at the same time; and then she must bid farewell to Silvermere—farewell to Lord Olney.

She must write to Mrs. Lyell at once concerning this young man, who was already, perhaps, on his way to Scotland. He must not again be permitted to see her charge. There was one thing which would prevent her being again seen by him, and it must be done, and at once.

While Lady Valeria thus mused, the countess approached her on the verandah, saying, in grief and perplexity:

"Rupert was here, and is gone again! Did you see him, Valeria?"

"See Rupert? I hope not! I have enough disagreeable things to encounter without stumbling upon a ghost."

The countess did not heed the mocking words, but went on:

"Some one must have seen him. He was dressed in light clothes, and carried his hat in his hand."

"Ah!" aspirated Lady Valeria. "So that was your Rupert, was it? Well, he has gone—he vanished around the wing some minutes ago."

Her ladyship sighed heavily, and went into the house, and up to her own room, repeating, softly, to herself:

"Yes, he has gone; I know that; but he will come again soon. I must have patience, and wait."

Philip Monteith was not the only one who had witnessed the betrothal of Lady Valeria and Lord Olney. Randal Gabron was hidden behind the foliage of a

climatis which trailed over a trellis at a short distance from the window, and had heard and seen all.

He uttered not a word, not even in a whisper, against the faithless girl, but glided away, unobserved as he had come, with stern, set face, and clenched fists.

(To be continued.)

AMY ROBSART.

By BRACEBRIDGE HEMTING.

Author of "Heart's Content," "Evander," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XLVII.

Of all afflictions taught a lover yet,
'Tis sure the hardest science to forget.

AT Tresillian's urgent entreaty, Anthony Foster was induced to call up the men who slept over the stables, in order that they might, with the aid of a ladder and ropes, bring Dick Whistler's body to the surface of the horrid pit down whose mouth he had fallen.

"I ever said that he would never die in his bed," remarked Anthony Foster. "Such as he generally come to a violent end. But we will say nothing of the dead, except that which is good. Rest his soul."

"It is a shocking thing to be hurried into eternity, with one's sins upon one's head, unrepented of," observed Tresillian, respectfully throwing a covering over the convulsed and blackened features of the dead man. "Take up the body, my men, and put it in some secluded place, until we can decide what steps can be taken to-morrow. Master Foster, will it please you to follow me? I crave your attention for a brief space. We have much to settle, and my eyes will be but little visited with sleep this night." "Such events as have taken place toget an unnatural excitement of the brain," answered Foster as he followed Tresillian along the dreary corridor, which re-echoed their footsteps with a dismal sound. "I myself have no inclination for my bed, though I generally enjoy sound repose."

When they regained Foster's apartment, they found the countess and Janet conversing together, and, seeing that Amy looked curiously at him, as if anxious to know the result of his investigation, and yet too fearful to inquire, Tresillian informed her that life was extinct. Dick Whistler, her new friend—though to serve himself and for his own interest—had been checked at the outset of his good work and sent to his last account through the infancy of Varney.

"Poor man," exclaimed Amy, sighing. "How wonderful are the ways of Providence! His death saved my life. Had it not been for him, I should infallibly have ceased to live; and it does seem wonderful that he should come to his end in attempting to do the only gracious and creditable act which, I fear, has distinguished his life."

"I knew him when he was but a child," remarked Foster. "Spare the rod, and you spoil your offspring," have I many a time observed to the good dame his mother, for 'tis certain if you train up a child in the way he should go, he will not depart from it. He had ever too much licence and an unruly tongue."

"It is necessary that we should talk about your future movements," said Tresillian to Amy. "I trust that your troubles are nearly over now, and I would recommend that you return at once to Lidcote, where you can await the course of events in a dignified way under the protection of Sir Hugh Robsart, your father, whose delight at seeing his truant child once more, and not dishonoured, as he sometimes feared, will, I am sure, restore his mind to its former tone."

"I long to see my father again," said Amy, the tears rushing to her eyes. "Oh, if I had never left his paternal care! But you will accompany me?"

"I think not," Tresillian answered, thoughtfully. "Master Foster will make a good and efficient guide, and I shall trespass so far on his good nature as to request him to go with you."

"I cannot leave my house," Foster hastily exclaimed. "There are ill-disposed persons abroad, and it has been whispered that I am wealthy, though, for the matter of that, I have but a trifle laid up for mine old age."

"If you expect anything to result from my interposition on your behalf, you must oblige me in this instance," Tresillian answered. "Remember, sir, that you have been hand in glove with Sir Richard Varney, and may in a manner be called the accomplice of his crimes."

Foster groaned inwardly.

"Will it not be best for me to go to Kenilworth again?" suggested Amy. "You tell me that my husband has relented in my favour and will acknowledge me."

"We know not the extent of Varney's influence, and what turn affairs are taking," rejoined Tresillian. "My opinion is that it will be preferable for me to go to court as your champion and ambassador. Surely, Amy, you can feel no love for one who could

even tacitly consent to a project which had your murder for its basis. Methinks all affection on your part should be obliterated by the treatment you have received at the hands of Leicester. Heaven knows I have no interested motive in saying this, but it becomes you most to hie you to your father's, while I proceed to Kenilworth without delay, and represent matters in their true light to her majesty, who is fond of justice, and will admit your position when it is proved to her satisfaction."

"I am content to follow your advice. Never before did I so much need the countenance and counsel of a friend. You have always studied my interest, and all the steps I have myself taken only serve to show me how fatally I have mistaken my own ability to act advisedly for myself."

"Let us so settle our arrangements," continued Tresillian. "We will snatch a few hours' sleep, and at break of day you, Amy, with Master Foster, shall start on horseback for Devonshire, while I will post to Kenilworth; and never did doughty knight do battle in a lady's behalf as will I for you before Elizabeth. No more aspersions shall be cast upon your character. There shall be an end to secrecy and intrigue, and when I speak let the guilty tremble."

"I did not think I could ever experience a revulsion of feeling against Budley," said Amy, musingly. "Yet he has pursued such a policy of double-dealing, and caused me to suffer so much, that if our marriage could be dissolved, and I could never meet him again, save as a stranger, I should feel perfectly content."

Tresillian's sad but expressive eyes lighted up with a fierce glow of triumph, and he looked hard at Amy, whose gaze instantly sought the floor. Was this the dawn of hope in his breast and the awakening of a buried love in hers? Whatever wild thoughts might have passed through his mind he quickly dismissed them. His face, a moment before aglow, resumed its impassive cast, and the strange light died out of his eyes as quickly as it had entered them.

After a little further conversation, which was of no interest, as it dealt chiefly with the details of the coming journey on the morrow, the countess retired under the care of Janet, being assured that the trap had been carefully shut and secured, so that they might with safety re-enter the apartments from which Amy had fled so precipitately a few hours before.

Tresillian threw himself down on the floor, with a few books for a pillow, and was soon asleep, hoping to refresh himself for the new fatigues he would have to encounter the next day. His mind felt easier than it had done for many a long week, and he fancied he now saw an end to the persecutions which Amy had suffered, and the doubtful existence which the ambitious and tortuous policy of the Earl of Leicester had compelled her to lead.

Anthony Foster, instead of retiring to rest, took a lamp and sought his treasure-house below, wishing to feast his eyes once more before he left Cannon upon the wealth he had heaped together, and for which he had done many an act he would not otherwise have dreamt of if his miser's heart had not prompted him to its commission.

What was his surprise to find the door unfastened? It seemed incredible to him that a lock which he had prepared with so much care could be forced; yet the fact was patent enough. With a white, scared face, and trembling in every limb, he staggered forward. His worst fears were confirmed. Thieves had visited the vault, his strong box was broken open, and all his money and valuables extracted from it. The lid was thrown back, and there was in the confusion around all the evidence of recent burglary.

Setting the lamp on the floor, the wretched man sat down upon the hard, dry bricks and made lament. The greatest punishment that could have occurred to him had happened. Where the treasure is, there will the heart be also. He felt as if he had nothing more left to live for—existence now was not worth having. Often had he tried to delude himself with the idea that he was saving the money for his daughter's sake, and hoped that Heaven would bless his efforts on this account. He saw the nakedness of this sophistry. It was for himself that he had been amassing wealth; it was not for Janet that he laid up this treasure. Bitter, scalding tears fell from his eyes, and he wept like a child who has been deprived of a cherished plaything. In a few minutes the man aged perceptibly. His hair, already streaked with gray, became quite white, and his long, serious face assumed a careworn, haggard look pitiable to behold.

"Oh, that I should live to see this day!" he cried, in agony of soul, when he was sufficiently recovered to speak, and even then his voice was thick and husky as if from the effects of wine. "This morning I rejoiced as a strong man to run a race. My lines had fallen unto me in pleasant places, but my moneys have fled away on the wings of the wind. Oh, wretched man! Oh, miserable creature! How

will your old age be supported now? Never again shall I look delightedly upon the piled-up gold! Cursed be he who has robbed me! May the cruel fates pursue him through a long life of penury and starvation! May others despoil him as he has despoiled me! May the foul fiend lay hold of him before his time, and his death come upon him unawares, far from the bed of peace and contentment!"

Here he began to weep and groan afresh, and beat his forehead with his clenched fists like one distraught.

Presently he continued:

"Would that the thieves had taken my life too! 'The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.' What is life worth to me now? I feel as if some one had dealt me a heavy blow. Oh, Lord, thou hast dealt heavily with me! 'Thou hast set my iniquities before thee, and my secret sins are in the light of thy countenance!' What shall I do! Woe is me, woe is me! I will call to mine aid the wise man, for in a multitude of counsellors there is wisdom."

Rising with difficulty, he went to the two rooms set apart for the use of Alcazar, one serving him as a laboratory, the other as a sleeping apartment. As he left the vault he took a parting look at the iron chest, to make sure that all was not a dream, but the evidences of a robbery were too patent to admit of any doubt, and with a shiver and a fresh fit of groaning he went on his miserable way.

The work-room of the alchemist was deserted. By the light he carried in his hand Foster was enabled to see that it had been vacated for some time. The fire had burnt to a white ash in the grate. The alembics were cold, and the crucibles empty.

"Why, where is the reverend man of art?" he exclaimed, in a tone of consternation. "He hath vanished. Perhaps the fiend, his master, hath spirited him away."

After a moment's reflection the truth dawned upon him.

"Heaven help me!" he said, staggering back afresh, while the lamp nearly fell from his nerveless grasp. "It is he who hath robbed me. I am undone by my own familiar friend. He must have watched me to and fro to my treasure-house. Behold I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly. 'Tell it not in Gath.' I am undone. 'Publish it not in the streets of Askelon!' The wise man is a thief. He spied at my weakness, and took advantage of it. Oh, rascal! Oh, villain! Have years of chicanery, fraud, hypocrisy only brought me to this? I will have his life, and he do not return to me my money! Whither has he fled? Oh, knave! Oh, false friend! 'Tis he, and he alone. As Nathan said unto David, I say unto thee, Alcazar, 'Thou art the man!'"

With this he ran to Tresillian, and waking him up with his incessant lamentation, caused the latter to ask what had happened.

"What do you wake me thus for?" cried Tresillian, in a cross mood. "Has Varney returned? If so, give me my sword—we must fight; but you have barred the house. My sword, I say!"

"Nay, 'tis worse—a thousand times worse than if Varney had come back with a white posse at his heels," answered Foster, with a lachrymose air.

"How worse, thou whining fellow?" queried Tresillian.

"I have been robbed. All my gold is gone from my secret hiding-place. My strong box has been forced, and I am little better than a beggar. Oh, woe is me that I should live to see this day! Yet man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward. If I had suspected him I might have taken precautions, but why should I guard against one who claims for himself the skill to make gold?"

"Of whom do you speak?"

"Of whom but Alcazar? That false alchemist—that wolf in sheep's clothing—that crafty pretender, introduced to me by Varney. They are of the same kidney. They are birds of a feather, and, knowing Varney, I should have known his villain physician."

"I have heard of this same Alcazar. Was he in thy house, and is he gone?" asked Tresillian.

"Gone! yes. I know not how long ago," answered Anthony Foster. "If I knew what route he had taken I would follow him a-horseback, though I am ill suited to riding. I will have hue and cry of him, though. The fellow shall not escape me thus. He may be far off, yet shall he be chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind. I trusted him as he had been my own brother, Master Tresillian. Oh! he has cruelly deceived me; but I was like an ox or a lamb that is brought to the slaughter: there is none to comfort me. All will rejoice at my misfortune, for I have not been liberal in the day of my prosperity. My hand has not been open. 'Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there?'"

"Cease your cries!" exclaimed Tresillian, with a contemptuous look. "You did not come by your money honestly, Master Foster, and it is a fitting

punishment that you should lose it. Set to work again with thy whole might, and Heaven will prosper your undertaking. At any rate, let me sleep now, and do thou the same; for if you are not ready to accompany the countess at daybreak I will most certainly denounce you to the queen as an accomplice of Sir Richard Varney, who shall be cut off root and branch."

This threat had such an effect upon Anthony Foster that he slunk out of the room like a whipped hound with his tail between his legs, and the smile was heightened by the low whining or yelping to which he gave utterance in his retreat, and Tresillian, turning round, was soon fast asleep again.

There was little sleep for Foster, however; that night; he turned about on his bed like one tormented with an evil conscience.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

All seems infected that the infected spy,
As all looks yellow to the jaundiced eye.

WHILE Tresillian was making his arrangements to travel himself to Kenilworth, and to forward the countess to Liddote under the care of Anthony Foster, great events were taking place at the castle.

We left her majesty, Elizabeth, awaiting Sir Richard Varney's communication after expressing her impatience at his delay in coming to the point.

Varney, with a cunning peculiarity his own, had stimulated the queen's curiosity to the highest pitch. He saw that his time had come, and that he should in all probability have a favourable hearing. He played for high stakes, risking much upon his present venture, for it was a dangerous thing to attack a man like the Earl of Leicester, who was so firmly rooted in the queen's favour; nor could he himself come out of the matter with clean hands, although he intended to urge that he had acted throughout entirely upon the compulsion of the noble master whom he had served not wisely but too well.

"I have already hinted to your majesty," began Varney, with the utmost deference and the deepest submission, "that I have deceived you."

"In what, man, in what? We have already hinted to you that our patience has its limits," replied the queen.

"In this, madame. Mistress Amy Robsart is not my wife!"

He looked at Elizabeth to see the effect of his words, but she was far from suspecting the truth even now, and answered, with a half-smile:

"We have suspected as much, and our punishment shall be, Sir Richard, that you shall marry the poor lady without delay. Our court may not tolerate such a scandal; and for your remissness the lady does right to hold you in disdain. Nor do I wonder at the hatred which her former lover, Tresillian, bears you on that account."

"Your grace mistakes me strangely," Varney hastened to say. "I cannot marry her because she is the wife of another."

It was now that the queen turned pale.

"Another, Sir Richard? What other, prithee?" she inquired.

"The Earl of Leicester, madame. She is his countess, as surely as I am standing here. He has threatened me with all sorts of pains and penalties if I revealed the truth to any one; but I could not bear to see you deceived any longer. The Mistress Varney whom you have seen is in fact and in deed no other than the lawful Countess of Leicester. She came hither, having escaped from Cumnor, where she was confined, thinking it was her right to entertain your highness and the other exalted guests of my lord; but his influence and my villainy—I mince not words, your majesty, knowing that I am in the wrong, and wish to make amends—sufficed to induce her to stave off the avowal."

Elizabeth became deadly pale, but she did not lose one jot of her majestic air. Looking straight before her, as if she would pierce the walls which contained the recreant earl, who was her entertainer, and who had deceived her so infamously, she walked towards the castle, saying to Varney:

"We will unmask this treachery. Follow us, Sir Richard Varney; your testimony will be needed."

Then she set her lips firmly together, and the indomitable spirit of the Tudors made itself apparent. Varney's revelation convinced her that a shameful trick had been practised upon her. No one knew but herself how deeply her heart had been engaged by Leicester's attentions; she alone could tell the tale of love which he had inspired. If it were true—if Varney had, indeed, betrayed his master, then Leicester was, in her opinion, a traitor of the deepest dye. She could not trust herself to hold further conversation with Varney, but hurried off to confront him with the earl and heap upon his false head those coals of fire which he so richly deserved.

Never since his marriage with Amy had Leicester been so much at ease as at that moment. His con-

science was at rest, because he had promised Tresillian that all should be avowed and cleared up. He had made up his mind to pursue a straight instead of a devious course, and though he knew that a storm was inevitable, he did not expect it to burst in all its fury at that moment. Nothing was farther from his thoughts. He was talking carelessly to Lords Burleigh and Walsingham about the grand tournament which was to take place in the tilt-yard that day, and rarely had they found him a more agreeable companion.

The queen, still followed by Sir Richard Varney, entered the great hall and beckoned to the Earl of Shrewsbury, then Earl Marshal of England, and, making straight for her withdrawing-room, said, as he hastened to her side:

"Summon Burleigh to our presence, and attach my Lord of Leicester of high treason. Bring him instantly before us, my lord."

The Earl of Shrewsbury stared in amazement, but did not gainsay his royal mistress, who entered the withdrawing-room and sat down upon the throne which had there been prepared for her, and Varney stood obsequiously before her.

Leicester had marvelled much to see the queen pass him in so unceremonious a manner, accompanied by Varney, who made him no sign of recognition or fealty, and the noblemen gathered together wondered what this strange demeanour on the part of the queen to their illustrious host might portend.

"I beg you to come with me and give me your sword," said Shrewsbury to Leicester. "Her majesty has ordered me to attach you. I know not what this may mean. Possibly 'tis a cloud which will blow over; but our royal mistress is not to be trifled with in her moments of passion. You are the best judge whether or not she has cause for her anger."

Leicester was pale, but calm and dignified. He could not imagine with any certainty what had happened, but, giving his sword, which hung from his side encased in a velvet scabbard, to Lord Shrewsbury, he said:

"Lead on, my lord, I am prepared to follow you."

A word from the earl marshal sufficed to bring Lord Burleigh with them, and they left the little knot of nobles and gentlemen, astounded at what had taken place, whispering together, and trying to hit upon some elucidation of the mystery.

"I have not known our royal mistress so long as some of you," said Sir Walter Raleigh, "but I will undertake to assert that it is no trifling matter which has so ruffled her plumage."

"The festivities do not please her, perhaps," hazarded Blount, who was standing by Raleigh's side.

"Tut, man!" answered Raleigh. "Could anything be better ordered or more magnificent? 'Tis not that. Look at Sir Richard Varney, he has hang-dog in his face, and he is at the bottom of this coil."

When Leicester appeared before the queen, he did not show any sign of trepidation, though he looked inquiringly at Varney, as if he relied upon and expected much from him; but Varney averted his gaze, and refused to meet the eyes of his patron, probably feeling ashamed of the disgraceful part he was playing in this most eventful drama.

"Repeat what you just now uttered, Sir Richard Varney!" cried the queen; "say it in the traitor's presence. We will have the confirmation of it from his own lips, for as yet we can scarce bring ourselves to believe that we have been so infamously betrayed and juggled with."

Still averting his eyes from Leicester, Varney repeated in as few words as possible his story of the earl's marriage with Sir Hugh Robsart's daughter, ending with a whining appeal for mercy to himself, which ran somewhat in this wise:

"Seeing, madame, that I have all along acted under the coercion of my master, I trust you will pardon my share in the deception, for indeed I have made amends for my fault by this tardy confession."

Elizabeth took no notice of this appeal, but, looking angrily at Leicester, appeared as if waiting for him to speak, but he did not take his eyes off Varney, for whom he seemed to entertain the profoundest contempt, mingled with astonishment at his audacity, which had led him to betray his secret.

Stamping her foot passionately, the queen exclaimed:

"Well, my lord, have you nothing to say to this grave charge? Has your confidant maligned you, or spoken simple truth?"

The earl started, as if recalled to himself, and replied, in a calm voice, which contrasted strangely with that of her majesty, who was struggling with almost uncontrollable emotion:

"The man has not spoken falsely; he has anticipated the admission I was about to make to your majesty. It was arranged between Tresillian and myself a few hours back that he should bring my wife here for presentation to you, and I presume the



[THE MISER'S PUNISHMENT.]

man who has so ill requited my favours has taken his cue from what passed between him and the Cornish gentleman."

"Presentation to me!" cried Elizabeth. "Death of my life! Does he think I have no more feeling than a stock or a stone? But the hand that has made can unmake. Never shall a Countess of Leicester flaunt before me at my court; plain Dudley shall you become, and plain Dame Dudley shall she be. Is your villany to pass unpunished?" she continued, her rage growing as she saw how passive he was under her wrath. "Every second word you have spoken to me for days and weeks past has been false. There never was such a deep-dyed traitor in this our realm! Does it not shame thee to have deceived thy queen, and to have destined for her the second place in thy affections when she would have given you all? Why, thou must have come to us with this creature's kisses on your lips—the thought is maddening! Then to hoodwink me, and to palm her off—your own wife as you insolently avow—as the spouse of this wretched tool of thine, who at last has unmasked thy villany to save his own head!"

"Punish me, madame, as you will. I justly deserve your wrath," said Leicester, sinking on one knee, and bending before the torrent which he saw it was vain to attempt to resist.

"Punish you!" repeated Elizabeth. "If you had a thousand lives you ought to lose them all! Punish you! yea, but not in haste. None shall say that I acted in this matter through mortification, or—or—jealousy!"

She uttered the word with difficulty, and gasped for breath, which, Lord Burleigh seeing, he thought it a favourable opportunity to intervene, and endeavour to stay the tempest of passion which was raging in his royal mistress's breast.

Lords Shrewsbury and Walsingham stood together.

Sir Richard Varney remained with folded arms near the vacant throne, or chair of state, which the queen was wont to use, and the earl himself continued to kneel on one knee, as if in deprecation of Elizabeth's anger, and the evidence of his disgrace was seen in his confusion as well as by the token of his being under arrest, which was shown by the sword he had resigned into the custody of the earl marshal—it being held under my Lord of Shrewsbury's left arm.

"May I entreat you, gracious madame, to calm this storm?" said the venerable statesman, in a voice of the utmost solicitude, as he placed himself by her side. "That you have been cruelly deceived and ill-used is patent to all of us, but I must implore your grace to remember that your exalted position renders

it inexpedient you should give way to feelings which have sway with ordinary mortals. Your acts and your words are historical. You do not live for today, but for after generations who will people this our England!"

The queen suffered her trusty councillor to lead her gently towards a window where their conversation could not be heard, and the Earl of Leicester rose, standing in a sullen attitude near Lord Walsingham, speaking no word and trembling for the future, knowing his fate hung in the balance. What he had so much dreaded had occurred; her majesty knew all. The deceit which he had practised for so long a time recoiled upon and overwhelmed him. As yet he knew not what had taken place at Cumnor, but of one thing he felt sure, and that was the safety of the countess. Amy lived. He had not her death to reproach himself with, and he attributed Varney's treachery to his anger at being ordered to deliver her into Tresillian's safe keeping after having quitted the castle with such very different instructions.

"You do not know, Burleigh," said the queen, "how your treacherous noble has trifled with my affections. I am almost afraid to confess even to you how weak I have been with him. Can you guess to what a position I might have raised him?"

"Your majesty would hint that he might have shared with you your throne?"

"Even so."

A tear trembled in Elizabeth's eye. It was a confession wrung from her feminine weakness.

"Be brave, madame," whispered Burleigh. "Be your own bright, gracious self once more. This story must not get about. It will never do for the vulgar to bandy your name coupled with Leicester's from mouth to mouth."

"You are right," answered Elizabeth, recalled to a sense of the responsibility of her position. "Yet I will shame this false earl; he shall acknowledge his wife here before all. Then we will return to London. His name is hateful to me. He shall bid a long adieu to all court favour, and, however useful his voice may have been in our councils, we will show him that England is not so destitute of statesmen as to prevent us from dispensing with his help."

"I am pleased to think your majesty has confided in me," returned Lord Burleigh, "and you will not repent placing confidence in one old enough to be your father, to whom your happiness and the glory of your reign are all in all."

"Had my father, Henry, been alive, how long would the traitor have kept his head on his shoulders?" said Elizabeth, with a little of the old fury sparkling in her eyes.

There was a pause, during which the experienced councillor did not attempt to interrupt the current of his royal mistress's thoughts.

"How read you my face now?" she asked, suddenly.

"I see no trace of agitation, madame. It is the face of a queen who knows how to govern herself as well as the subjects Heaven has committed to her charge."

"After all, Burleigh, I am a woman—a poor, weak woman—and the majesty I should wear about me is inferior to my natural passions," Elizabeth said, in a slightly tremulous voice.

This, however, was but a momentary recurrence to the weakness of which she was ashamed. Erect, majestic, a true daughter of Henry VIII., every inch a queen, a grandeur and nobleness breathing from every feature, she turned from the window, and, addressing the earl marshal, exclaimed:

"My lord, it pleases us that you should restore his sword to the Earl of Leicester. His arrest terminates. We cannot forget that we are his lordship's guest and sojourning under his roof, where as yet we have met with hospitality."

"Whatever skill I have in entertaining your majesty shall be continued," the earl said, in a singularly humble and contrite voice, "and when your majesty has departed, this poor castle, for the ownership of which I am indebted to your grace's good will, can only resemble a land troubled with darkness through a sudden eclipse of the sun."

"Spare your eloquence, my lord," replied Elizabeth, bitterly. "We know now how much value to put upon your studied phrases. We purpose remaining at Kenilworth until your bride can be brought from her present abiding-place. Your marriage shall be celebrated afresh, and when that is accomplished we will leave you to put in practice such rejoicings as you may be inclined for; and, as you value our sovereign displeasure, we warn you not to dare to venture near our royal person until we command you to do so—a period which will probably be identical with the Greek Calends."

"Eternal banishment!" cried the earl. "Oh, madame, take my miserable life at once!"

The queen seemed to enjoy his consternation, and was about to give some orders for the immediate bringing of the countess from Cumnor to Kenilworth when there was a knocking heard without, and Lord Walsingham, who acted the part of usher, went out to make inquiry, and returned with the information that Master Tresillian, of Cornwall, craved an audience of her majesty.

(To be continued.)



[THE LITTLE MYSTERY.]

HOW DID LADY NEVILLE DIE?

BY THE AUTHORS OF

"The Unloved Wife," "The Curse of Everleigh," &c.

CHAPTER V.

Life with you,

Glows in the brain and dances in the arteries;
'Tis like the wine some joyous guest hath quaff'd,
That glads the heart and elevates the fancy.

Old Play.

FIFTEEN years had elapsed since the events last narrated. Claude Revere was nineteen. Returning from a tour through Scotland on horseback, accompanied only by his valet, who was taken ill at a little mountain inn, he was compelled to leave him behind, or remain with him.

The latter alternative was not to be considered a moment by the impetuous and wayward young man. He proceeded therefore alone, leaving orders as to where Vance, his man, was to join him, if he were sufficiently recovered by a certain date.

Before the end of the first day's ride over the beautiful but lonely mountain road, Claude wished that he had waited for his valet. The second day his wilfulness—for he had refused a guide—ended in his losing his way, and he wandered about till near nightfall, weary, hungry, and in a rage at the misfortunes he had brought on himself.

His horse absolutely refused to go any farther, for either blows or coaxing, and Claude, dismounting, flung down his saddle for a pillow, and, securing the animal near by, threw himself upon the ground, under an immense blackthorn tree, and, in spite of his discomforts, fell asleep, and slept till the morrow's sun was high in the heavens.

His first thought upon waking was of his horse, which he had secured over night close by.

He could not see him anywhere. Rising to his feet, he began to look for him with some anxiety, and presently discovered him browsing quietly upon the top of a neighbouring hill, between which and him was a long and deep ravine.

With a heavy sigh, he set out after him, leaving his saddle where it lay upon the ground. He was tired and sore from his unaccustomed sleep upon the ground, and hungry too, for he had not eaten since the morning before.

He found the way long, the descent of the one hill precipitous, the ascent of the other rugged; and, to crown all, in the windings by which he mounted the last, he lost sight of his horse.

While he was floundering about in the bushes, and venting imprecations, he heard the crackling of trampled boughs below him, and, rushing that way, beheld

his missing steed flying down the mountain side at a speed that risked his own neck, to say nothing of that of the reckless monkey who bestrode him.

The creature—who seemed a mere lad—wore a red cap, and at every step belaboured with his feet the frightened animal he rode.

Claude had his gun with him. Raising it suddenly to his shoulder, he sent a bullet whistling so near the ear of the lad that the red cap ducked instantly, and, without even turning his head, the creature vanished in the bushes.

The horse stood still at his master's call; he was too well trained to run at the whiz of a bullet, and Claude, taking the halter on his arm, slowly returned to the spot where he had left his saddle.

To his consternation and rage, the saddle was now gone.

In vain he rushed this way and that; he could find no trace of it.

"Look over your head, stupid!" called a mocking voice, and, sure enough, there was his saddle hanging in the blackthorn tree.

It was impossible to think where the voice came from. Waiting a moment, then keeping a sharp eye on his horse, for fear of another mishap to him, Claude proceeded to mount to the rescue of his saddle.

A few feet from the ground the tree was forked and hollow.

To his amazement, when he reached this point, the red cap darted up from the hollow, and a creature of infinitesimal proportions, evading his eager clutch, nimbly leaped to the ground, and running to his gun, which he had of course left below, instantly cocked and levelled it at him.

"Wait till I catch you, you midget!" called Claude, in a rage, beginning to descend rapidly, and knowing that the gun was not loaded.

Discovering this, the small creature threw it down again with a gesture of disgust, and stood eyeing him saucily.

"If you're not afraid of it, I don't know why I should be," said the same mocking voice that had told him where to look for his saddle.

Having reached the ground, Claude stood like one petrified.

Never in his life had he been so astonished.

It was not alone the startling and vivid beauty of this saucy face, with its carnation bloom and flashing coal-black eyes, but the discovery that the creature was a girl instead of a boy.

Her garb was a mixture of the attire of both, the principal feature of the latter being the red cap, from below which a perfect torrent of blue-black curls escaped, hanging nearly to her waist.

Scarcely more than a child she seemed in her diminutiveness, but the rounded, undulating shape showed that she was on the very threshold of womanhood.

As she stood, saucy yet blushing under Claude's admiring glances, undismayed yet poised for flight, the youth thought he had never seen anything half so lovely.

"Was it really you, then?" he demanded, at length. "Was it really you who played me all those tricks?"

The girl laughed, and began to edge away from him.

"Don't go," pleaded Claude, strangely attracted by her wild beauty and grace.

"Why not?" she replied, with a mocking sparkle in the mischievous dark eyes, as Claude moved towards her.

"I've something to tell you. I have, really."

She stopped.

"Well, what is it?"

"This, pretty one. I love you, though I never saw you before in my life," he said, boldly.

The wild thing put two fingers in her mouth, and gave a loud, shrill, prolonged whistle, that startled Claude and his horse about equally.

Claude coloured.

"I shall have a kiss for that, beauty," he muttered, moving towards her.

The girl heard him, and a strange sparkle shot from her brilliant black eyes, as she retreated, step by step, watching him.

Claude followed her, in the same manner. But, suddenly imagining that what he purposed doing was very easy, he leaped towards her.

That instant, with a tantalising but most musical laugh, his enchantress flew from his grasp as though she had wings.

Following her too eagerly, his foot caught in a root that had grown above the ground, and he fell full length.

When he rose, smarting from the fall, the wild mountain beauty was no longer in sight, but her silver laugh rang out upon the distance, and he was rash enough to make another effort to overtake her.

The result was that when he finally gave over this useless pursuit he found himself so utterly bewildered that he could not even tell which way to go to get back to his horse, which he vainly imagined he should easily find again by means of the large blackthorn tree under which he had left him.

His mortification and anger were great, and to these were added the pangs of hunger, temporarily forgotten in the excitement of his novel acquaintance.

"The little jade has doubtless gone to hide my

horse again," he said to himself, disconsolately, as he stumbled about and lifted himself on tiptoe to look for the blackthorn tree.

Suddenly the sound of voices, of a man and woman talking loudly, broke upon his ear. He hastened that way eagerly, coming upon the two without warning.

A man and woman stood in angry talk.

The man was very dark, with tawny hair and light eyes, whose sullen, "down" look was their characteristic expression.

The woman had her back to Claude. A worn straw hat hung from one shoulder by a faded string, and an immense coil of long, silky black hair had got loose and tumbled down her waist.

Both were too much absorbed to see or hear Claude, though he spoke twice.

"Ay, he's done with you now," he heard the man say, hoarsely. "I told him that as'll keep him from coming augh you again in this world."

"It was you, then?" the woman's voice repeated, slowly; and, though he could not see her face, Claude could imagine the malignant rage that was distorting it as she drew nearer and nearer the other, with the movement of some savage animal about to spring.

The man fairly covered before her.

"Don't you touch me, Royce, if you know when you're well off," he began, blindly groping for a knife that gleamed below his belt.

But the woman saw the movement, and her fury burst all bounds.

Swift as a flash, she snatched the weapon and buried it to the hilt in his bosom.

The sullen light eyes of the man seemed to turn glassy with the very blow. He toppled backward, catching at the handle of the knife, which protruded from his side.

The lake was behind him. Without a cry, he dropped over the cliff. The waters below received him.

The woman stood staring, after recovering from a momentary paralysis of horror. Claude ran to the edge of the cliff and looked over.

The water was eddying in faintly crimson circles round one spot, but he watched in vain for the reappearance of the body.

Then he found a little path, which led from the top of the cliff, and followed it down at a dangerous run.

He waded into the water some distance and shouted; then he ran along the edge of the lakeside way, but he saw nothing, and he came back to the woman.

"What did you kill him for?" he demanded.

The woman turned her face that way. There were the remains of beauty in it; the eyes were like black doves, but sunken.

"He had done worse by me than killing," she said, her white teeth meeting with a vengeful click.

"You are a murderer," said Claude; "and if I do my duty, I shall lodge information against you at the nearest town."

"I don't care what you do," was the sullen response.

"Was he your husband?" asked Claude.

The woman's black eyes dwelt on him a moment.

"Eighteen years ago," she said, in a constrained voice, "he was my sweetheart. I jilted him for another, whose little finger was worth more to me than his whole body. To revenge himself he lied about me to my husband, and I was driven with my child from the very presence of the man I adored. I never knew till to-day who had wronged me. I have punished the traitor as he deserved and as I would do again."

So saying, she turned away, and with a certain air of majesty moved from the spot.

Claude followed her.

"I have lost my way," he said; "will you tell me how to find it? I was on horseback. I wandered away from my horse, and got lost in the bushes. He was tied by the reins under a very large blackthorn tree."

"I know the spot. If you will come with me to where I live and wait a little, I will send for your horse."

Claude continued to follow her, till they came in sight of what seemed nothing but a gloomy rain.

"What den is this she is taking me to?" thought he, coming to a full stop, and regarding his conduct suspiciously.

The woman turned about as soon as she missed him. She read something of his distrust in his face.

"You are afraid?" she asked, with slight sarcasm.

Claude coloured.

"You don't live here?" he remarked.

"Yes, and no one lives with me but one man-servant, who has gone out to-day, and a young girl, a mere child. You see we are not very dangerous. Come, I will give you your dinner, though you are my enemy."

"I your enemy?"

"Are you not going to inform against me, and have me arrested as a murderer?"

Claude hesitated and grew pale.

"No," he said, abruptly; "it is none of my business. I will have nothing to do with it."

The woman looked at him a moment, then moved on as before.

Claude hesitated no longer. The ruin looked more inviting on a near approach. There was a clean court, and beyond that some rooms in good preservation, and well, even handsomely fitted up.

Much-worn but still rich carpets covered the floors. There were some fine paintings on the walls, and the furniture was of an antique, solid make, cushioned with velvet, and inlaid with tinted woods.

The woman showed him a small bookcase, tolerably supplied with books, that had evidently not been much read, and set about preparing his dinner herself.

Claude was not inclined to read, however, so much as to ponder the strange events of the morning, and to wonder if his little red-capped tormentress belonged here.

An hour after, wandering among the ruins, he beheld his small acquaintance of the morning, quietly seated upon the stone pavement of the court, mending a fishing-tackle, which had evidently seen service.

As she looked up at his approach her roguish features were composed to the most demure expression of gravity, and no sparkle of recognition came into her glancing dark eye as she bent again to her task.

Claude stood looking at her, with a queer expression of perplexity, pique, and admiration.

He waited some moments, thinking she would speak presently if he let her alone; but she gave no sign.

He broke the silence himself at last.

"I'll have that kiss yet, you Will-o'-the-Wisp," he said, in a low voice, which his anger accented almost imperceptibly.

The girl made no reply, but as she stood, half-turned away, she was watching him furtively.

She let him come almost beside her. But then, as the handsome, saucy face bent, and the daring arm was stealing round her, her own left arm was suddenly flung about the neck of the incautious youth in such a manner as to half-strangle him, while with her right hand she administered several stinging blows, first upon one side of his face and then upon the other, till his ears rung.

Then, releasing him as suddenly, she darted away, triumphant, and hid herself in the ruins.

Claude did not follow her. Instead, he found his horse, and, having obtained the necessary directions as to his destination from the woman, he departed, with his face smarting and his temper at fever heat.

"Odd," he muttered, angrily, as he rode off. "I should think so."

The woman, who was our old friend Royce, looked after him with a strange gleam in her black eyes.

"It's a queer happening," she muttered, "that sends Madame Revere's pet this way; and to think my fate should be in his hands after all!"

Then her look changed. She threw up her hands with a groan, a passionate, despairing cry of "Oh! my husband, my darling! Shall I ever see you again? Only to see you!"

CHAPTER VI.

Upon her face there was the tint of grief,
The settled shadow of an inward strife,
And an unquiet drooping of the eye,
As if its lid were charged with unshed tears.

Byron.

It was a large and lofty apartment, the walls panelled in purple and gold alternately, the ceiling frescoed in the same colours exquisitely.

The carpet was a bed of purple panicles with golden hearts; the curtains of purple velvet, with linings of yellow silk. The chairs, sofas, and ottomans were purple velvet, with gold arabesques.

The room had a single occupant—a woman, somewhat above the medium height, of haughty and majestic presence.

Madame Revere was still beautiful, though long past thirty, and though grief and anxiety had had their cankered teeth in her heart more than twenty years.

Suddenly the purple velvet curtains of an alcove in the farther part of the room were lifted, and a young man stood in the aperture, looking at her with a satirical smile on his handsome lips.

He was tall and graceful, with eyes and hair like her he was watching. Still the resemblance between them was not striking, though as he uttered the single word "Mother" a singular expression came into the face of each, an expression that spoke, if such a thing could be, of both affection and aversion at the same moment.

At the sound of his voice Madame Revere, who seemed to be waiting for some one, turned that way with a start.

"You here!" she said, in a displeased tone; "and after my telling you that I particularly desired to be alone this morning! Your disregard of my wishes, Claude, is becoming insufferable. You will be good enough to retire at once."

The young man stood still, and a look of resolution came into his blue eyes.

"I have observed," he said, "ever since I was old enough to observe anything, that the fifth of December is with you a fatal anniversary of some event. I have reasons for suspecting that this event concerns me, and though I have hitherto regarded your desire to be alone on that day, I cannot regard it longer. Hidden behind this curtain I might have been, unknown to you, a witness of whatever is about to transpire. I chose, however, to warn you of my intention. I am here, mother, and here I intend to remain, with your consent or without it."

Madame Revere had grown paler every moment while he was speaking. She controlled her agitation with difficulty.

"What is it that you suspect, or imagine?"

"I suspect, I imagine all things of a mother to whom I have been an object of idolatry one moment, of hatred the next, all my life."

An expression of bitter pain contracted madame's haughty, beautiful face. She was about to reply when steps were heard approaching.

"Ah, go, go!" she cried, with a frantic look and accent. "I swear to you that you shall know all—only go now."

Disregarding her agony, Claude remained where he was, his eyes watching the door eagerly.

But as it began to swing on its gilded hinges he seemed to change his mind, and, falling swiftly back within the alcove, let the curtain drop.

Madame's eyes sparkled with anger.

"Only her child would dare defy me thus."

The thought seemed to fire her with a sort of malignant courage for the approaching interview.

It was Salaris who came in. Salaris grown taller, and wearing a beard of jetty richness and unusual length.

He was dressed with exceeding elegance, in the fashionable costume of the day, and from his shoulders depended a cloak of the most superb Genoese velvet, lined with sable.

Certainly the once poverty-stricken boy must have changed somehow on a mine of wealth, for this magnificent cloak was buttoned at the throat with a single large ruby.

"You were expecting me?" he said, without glancing at the seat madame haughtily indicated.

"You are always welcome," she replied, "for there is always at the bottom of my soul a hope that you will, at last, be moved by my long agony to repentance, that you will some day tell me the truth."

"Repentance is not for me, madame; above all on this fatal anniversary of—"

"Of your unhappy sister's death," interrupted Madame Revere, with a sudden, pale glance towards the alcove. "Salaris, to-morrow is also a fatal anniversary."

"To you, madame!" he said, coldly.

"To me," she repeated, weeping; "it will be twenty-one years to-morrow, Salaris."

"Twenty-one to-day, madame."

"Salaris, my son Claude was of age six weeks ago."

"Your son, madame?" he repeated, in so awful a voice that the haughty woman turned white to her lips.

She tried to speak, but her voice died in a husky whisper:

"Am I never to know the truth?"

But he heard her, and said:

"At the judgment seat, madame, where all things shall be made known."

The woman started wildly, shuddered, and drew farther back from him, then, in a sudden, fierce abandon, she flung herself at his feet.

"Good Salaris—dear Salaris," she pleaded, "see, I kneel to you; I entreat you in the dust; I swear to you I am innocent of Lady Neville's death as the babe you stole from me that awful night. Give me my child! Have mercy! Oh, have mercy!"

As she clasped his knees with her jewelled hands, Salaris steadied himself by a triple statue of the Fates which stood there. The marble faces of the Three Sisters were not more inexorable than he.

An icy smile curved his lips as he looked down at her.

"There is then no mother-instinct?" he said.

Madame lifted her head—her eyes shone.

"Is he my son—this one?"

Salaris only lifted his black eyebrows, and shrugged his shoulders.

Madame stood up, regal once more in her rage.

"If I thought he was her son, I would strangle him."

"It is the merest humanity, then, to leave you still in doubt."

"I should have killed you long ago, but that your secret must have died with you," she said, clenching her teeth.

"Madame," he said, slowly, "I will exchange secrets with you. You shall know mine when you have told me yours. How did Lady Neville die?"

Madame did not utter a word. She remembered what she had for an instant forgotten, that Claude was in the alcove.

Salaris waited a moment, then, with his usual ceremonious bow, departed.

Salaris was well known in London by this time as a man of generous but eccentric character, as a man of mysterious, but seemingly inexhaustible resources. The door had barely closed behind him when the purple curtain of the alcove was again lifted, and Claude Revere appeared.

The most eager excitement was expressed in his handsome face. Whatever his suspicions had been they had never taken so remarkable a direction before as now.

He advanced quickly to Madame Revere's side. She only shuddered at his approach.

"Mother," he said.

The unhappy woman looked up, and a great sob broke from her lips.

"You heard him?" she cried, wildly, "yet you called me mother."

"Ah, mother," he repeated, a strange smile crossing his lips, "you will trust me now, you will tell me this wonderful secret which you have kept from me twenty-one years."

"You have heard all," she answered, looking away.

"Not all. Who is this man, Salaris?"

"He was Lady Neville's adopted brother."

"Ah! And was there—did Lady No—was there anything mysterious, anything singular, about the death of Lady Neville?"

"She died of heart disease. You can ask Sir Philip Wain. He attended her."

"I ask you," said Claude, fixing a penetrating glance upon her.

Madame seemed to shrink within herself, a blueish pallor overspread her face.

"I am answered," Claude said, in a low voice and with an involuntary shudder; "now about the child. Am I not your son?"

A groan burst from Madame's pallid lips. Then, remembering whose son this might be who questioned her so, she rose from her chair with a touch of her natural imperiousness.

"Leave me," she said. "I desire to be alone."

Claude stood sternly still.

"Then I will go," she cried, sweeping towards the door; "not even my son shall insult me with such questions."

Claude intercepted her.

"Permit me," he said, "to quote the words of your friend just gone: 'Your son, madame?'"

Madame turned desperately.

"He is her son," she thought; "and he suspects the truth."

Claude smiled again as he read her terror-stricken face.

"Look at me," he whispered, excitedly, close to her ear; "you have no cause to fear me. I don't care one farthing whether I am the son of Lady Neville or yours. But I mean to be Lord Neville, if I live."

Madame Revere looked up, doubt and faith ever fluctuating in her soul. She said to herself now: "Ah! he is my son, after all," and some tears, which were at least honest, rose to her eyes.

Claude led her to a seat, then stood beside her.

"Now, then," he said, imperatively, "the truth, all of it. You have studiously concealed from me that I had any interest in the Neville estates and title, but I have found out for myself that I have. What is there between me and an earl's coronet?"

He spoke with feverish eagerness and exultation. "Nothing, except the doubt—" began Madame Revere, then her countenance fell. "We are powerless," she resumed, "completely at that man's mercy!"

"Why so?"

"We can prove nothing, not even that you are anybody's son without his help."

"I am not so sure of that. There must be other proof in the world, if we could but find it."

"There is the other child."

"The other child?" exclaimed Claude.

"Lady Neville's son was stolen at the same time with mine," said Madame, in a low voice.

"Ah! I did not understand that. But what was that for? Come, come," he added, impatiently, "I want the whole story, now. What was that for?"

Madame averted her face.

"Salaris imagined I had changed the children."

"In order to pass your own off as the heir? Good for you!" exclaimed Claude, his azure eyes glowing like coals. "Well?"

"He took both, in order to force me to identify my own child before he would return him to me."

"And you?"

"I pretended I could not tell which was my child without seeing both."

Claude started, and began to pace the floor eagerly.

"Why, then," he cried, "Salaris is no wiser than you now!"

Madame shook her head.

"There was a woman, a sort of upper servant in the house, who helped him about the children. She was with him that night, and though I sent her out of the room, she must have watched me when I went as usual to pay them my nightly visit. She could have told, by watching me, which was in reality my son. Besides, Salaris afterwards married this very woman."

"Where is the other child?" asked Claude, stopping in his walk with a troubled look.

"I don't know."

"Perhaps he is dead."

"I have thought so, because Salaris never refers to him, and because he has never enforced his claim to the Neville estates."

Claude looked exultant again.

"In that case we have only to manufacture our proof and defy Salaris. But first we must discover what has become of the other child. You would have done a sensible thing, Madame Revere, if you had told me all this long ago; we have lost much valuable time."

He moved towards the door.

Madame rose, clasping her hands.

"What are you going to do, Claude?"

"I am going to beard this lion of yours in his den. I am going to see Salaris."

Madame began to tremble.

"Be careful what you do, Claude. Salaris may do us terrible harm if you defy him."

Claude stopped, and came back to her.

"Has he any proof?" he asked, in a low voice, the colour going out of his handsome, fresh-tinted face.

Madame understood him. They did not look at each other, and Madame hesitated to steady her voice before she spoke.

"No absolute proof," she said, almost indistinctly, at last.

"How do you know?"

"He would not have tried all these years to wring from my agony confession of a crime, if he had possessed what he considered proof already," said Madame, bitterly.

"True. What do you fear then, since you are innocent of that of which he suspects you—you are innocent?" looking at her for the first time.

"Yes, I am innocent," was the low response.

But Claude's face grew whiter than before as she gave it.

For an instant he had hoped that she might be innocent of that.

He was ambitious, and both by nature and education somewhat unscrupulous; but he was young yet, his soul still unstained with any actual crime, and to have it come so near him gave him sensations he could not readily shake off.

This guilty mother, whose guilt had been incurred for her child, had not done well to let him who might be that son suspect how very terribly she had sinned for him.

From that hour he never called her "Mother" again. Bad as he became himself, there always remained one chord in his breast which vibrated painfully whenever he thought of what she had done.

CHAPTER VII.

Her eyes as stars of twilight fair,
Like twilight, too, her dusky hair;
But all things else about her drawn
From May-time and the cheerful morn.

Wordsworth.

As Claude ran away to his dressing-room before going out, he said to a man standing in the hall:

"Call a cab, Vance."

"When I am Lord Neville," he then said to himself, "I shall only have to name which of my elegant carriages I will occupy when I ride out. No more cabs then."

He looked like the prince in the fairy tale as he came down, attired in a dark-blue visiting suit, which became his delicate complexion and azure eyes, and his chiselled lip curled with aristocratic contempt of the comparatively humble equipage to which he was obliged, for the present, to restrict himself.

He was driven at once to the residence of Salaris, a magnificent structure at Kensington; but not finding him at home, he returned slowly towards the Row.

from which some carriages were now departing. Among them he presently descried the stately and elegant equipage of Salaris. It was drawn by four jet-black steeds, whose silken manes streamed in the wind as their proud hoofs spurned the ground.

It was occupied by three individuals, and of these Salaris was one.

But it was not on him that Claude Revere's glance dwelt fascinated and breathless.

The spell was produced by a young girl, whose beauty was of that vivid, electrical type which takes the soul of man by storm.

A setting of short black curls framed the sparkling picture like a rich carving, and the low laugh which rippled her ripe lips disclosed tiny, even rows of milk-white teeth, like pearls in a crimson casket.

Claude scarcely saw Salaris, and never glanced at the young man beside him. He did not seem to breathe as the carriage swept by.

Then, with a rapid and wondering look, he ordered his driver to turn his horse and follow at a prudent pace.

Soon after, seeing an acquaintance in the street, he stopped the hansom and signalled him to join him.

"My dear fellow," said this friend, in answer to his inquiries, "is it possible this is the first time you have seen Salaris's last whim?"

"I have been out of town," explained Claude.

"Ah, true. But you would not be much the wiser if you had been here all the time. All that any of us know is, that she is Lady Audrey Saville. Lady Odd they call her half the time, and, by George! she is queer!"

"Audrey? Odd? I thought so," muttered Claude, under his breath. "Jupiter! how handsome she is!"

"That was her husband on the other seat with Salaris," volunteered his friend.

"Her husband?" said Claude, faintly, his heart sinking strangely.

The other laughed.

"My poor fellow. Has she hit you so bad as that the first clip?"

Claude frowned.

"I am not hit at all, as you call it, Bob. She seemed to me a mere child."

His friend shrugged his shoulders.

"About seventeen," he said; "but such sorceresses as she begin in their long clothes, it is my opinion. She's the rage just now, though they say she can't spell her own name."

"What?"

"Fact, 'pon my honour. I had it from reliable authority. Sir Angus picked her up in that Highland tour of his, married her, and put her to school somewhere in France. The witch ran away from school in boy's clothes, got to London somehow—beggared her way, they say—and declared she wouldn't go back. So now they have a governess for her, and all sorts of masters. She has a vicious temper, too, by all accounts; flings inkstands at her writing-master, and cuffs her governess with her slipper."

"You said she was one of Salaris's whims."

"Yes. She bewitched him at first sight, the little ignoramus; and when she has a row with her husband she runs away to Salaris, and he makes it up for them."

"Quarrels with her husband?"

Claude made a mental note.

"Who is Sir Angus Saville? I never heard of him."

"Nor anybody else," laughed Bob. "It's my opinion the knighthood is a hoax. He's another of Salaris's whims. It may be on his wife's account, though. They say Salaris pays all his bills at sight."

Claude started as if from a dream.

"What is that you say?"

Bob, who was a notorious gossip, repeated it.

"Where does this Sir Angus Saville come from?" demanded Claude.

Bob laughed.

"German University and the Desmonds," he said.

"Lady Desmond introduced him."

Claude pondered anxiously. A startling suspicion had arisen in his mind.

"How old should you take Sir Angus Saville to be?" he asked.

Bob thought a moment.

"Well, about your age I should say."

"Confound him!" thought Claude. "It must be, and he's her husband too."

He made an excuse to get rid of Bob presently, and drove at once to Salaris's residence again.

The same man admitted him as before, but said his master was still not in.

Claude replied he would wait, and was accordingly shown into a small reception-room.

It was the first time he had been in Salaris's house, and he looked about him with some curiosity, for the most fabulous rumours of eccentric splendour were rife.

The apartment was hung with rich crimson velvet.

spotted with gold, and the furniture was upholstered in the same style.

He had arrived thus far in his observations when the door swung wide open without sound, and Lady Audrey Saville came swiftly into the room.

She wore a dress of some soft, clinging, amber material, embroidered in colours, with coral ornaments in her hair and on her neck.

Claude's heart beat violently as he arose and bowed low without speaking.

"Two years must have changed me somewhat," he thought, "and it is just as well if she should not recognise me."

Lady Audrey's electric glance swept over him without any sign as she asked, abruptly:

"Were you told that Salaris had gone out?"

"I was."

"You were misinformed. Come with me."

She made an impatient gesture with a little hand, jewelled like an empress's, and swept out again, her amber skirt trailing after her in heavy folds.

Claude followed.

She led him through several dusky, luxuriously decorated corridors, with white statues gleaming among purple hangings, and, pausing before a door of ebony, wrought with gold figures, she opened it without knocking and entered.

Salaris sat at an ebony secretaire writing. He rose quickly at their entrance, and his white forehead became slightly wrinkled at sight of Claude. Lady Audrey glided forward.

"Zeno told this gentleman that you were not at home. I knew you were, and I hate falsehood, so I brought him here myself."

Salaris gave her a curious glance and turned to Claude.

"Did you wish to see me, young man?" he asked, in a somewhat severe tone.

Claude bowed haughtily.

Salaris turned to the lady.

"We will excuse you, Lady Saville."

The lady laughed saucily, and linked a charming arm in his for answer.

Her open sleeve falling back disclosed that round, ivory arm almost to the shoulder, and Claude thrilled at the sight.

Salaris bent a look of mingled affection and reproof upon her, whereupon, standing on tiptoe, she whispered in his ear:

"I want to know what it's all about. Zeno said you told him to say you were not at home. Did you?"

Glancing at Claude, Salaris saw that he had heard, and he coloured slightly.

"I come from Madame Revere," Claude explained, as though in reply to the questioning of Salaris's eyes.

Salaris turned again to Lady Saville, who shook her head.

A sort of flash passed over Salaris's statuesque face. In another instant he had conducted the lady to the door, and left her outside, but with so graceful and courteous an air that Claude did not recognise the compulsion under that velvet touch.

Salaris turned to Claude, and seemed calmly to await his pleasure.

The young man had been maturing his course of action ever since Bob Towers had told him there was a mystery about Sir Angus Saville.

"If Sir Angus is that other child," he said to himself, "it must be that Salaris does not know himself which is the true heir, the true son of Lady Neville. He is vacillating still in his own convictions."

The cold, severe countenance and mien of Salaris, and an expression in his lustrous black eyes that could not be called friendly, were not reassuring.

Claude Revere was not, however, a man easily daunted.

"I heard a most singular story this morning, sir," he began, meeting Salaris's eye steadily. "I am come to you for corroboration or denial."

"I may decline to give either."

"That will be equivalent to one."

"Which?"

"Corroboration."

Salaris smiled.

"I have long suspected that Madame Revere was not my mother."

"Ah!—really! And you tell me this?"

"Sir Angus Saville would come much nearer filling Madame Revere's heart than I have ever done," said Claude, defiantly.

"Do you think so?" inquired Salaris, fixing a cold and penetrating glance upon him, and seeming in no wise startled at the mention of Sir Angus.

"Did Madame Revere send you here?" he asked presently.

"No, sir."

"Did she know of your coming?"

"She did."

"And permitted it?"

"How could she hinder me after I knew all?"

"All?" said Salaris, incredulously.

"Madame has told me everything."

"Really?" asked Salaris, with a sardonic smile.

"Would it be an impertinence on my part to ask what everything may mean?"

Claude's cheek took a new pallor as he said:

"I know the circumstances of Lady Neville's death; I know about the stolen children; I know that I am not Madame Revere's son; I believe that Lady Neville was my mother."

Salaris's marble features did not change. He perhaps reflected a moment.

"Upon what do you found that belief?" he asked.

"Mainly upon the distrust Madame and myself both have always entertained of each other."

Salaris seemed to study a moment.

"Well, what do you propose to do about it?" he asked, placidly.

"Can you doubt? I propose to take immediate steps to learn the truth, and secure what I believe to be my birthright, the title and estates of Neville. Indeed, my coming to you is my first step in that direction."

"What if I decline, or am unable to be of assistance to you?"

"I shall resort to the law."

"Are you aware that the investigation you propose subjects Madame Revere to a terrible risk?"

Claude's blood seemed all to rush from his face to his heart.

"Risk?" he managed to say, interrogatively.

"The circumstances of Lady Neville's death have never been properly investigated. The course you propose would be very likely to bring something new to light concerning that. Are you prepared to meet it?—to see the woman you have so long considered your mother put upon trial for her life for a frightful crime?"

Salaris watched his visitor with a terribly keen eye while he put the question thus.

"I am," said Claude.

Unconsciously he had fallen into the very trap Salaris had set for him.

"He turned pale when I first alluded to Madame's crime. He knows she is guilty," thought Salaris, "and now he coolly talks about putting her on trial for her life for that very crime, which proves to me that he does not mean to investigate at all. He looks like Madame Revere. He must be her son!"

On his side, Claude, unconscious how fatally he had committed himself in the astute Salaris's opinion, was thinking:

"I must contrive to make this old fellow commit himself to me somehow."

Salaris perhaps read his thoughts with his wonderfully keen eyes, for, turning to a handsome gold and ebony escrutoire, he opened it, and took out a small roll of papers.

"Here," he said, coldly, "is all the testimony that I should be able to furnish concerning you. Would you like to examine it?"

Claude pressed forward eagerly.

Salaris smiled strangely as he did so.

The papers were, first, a copy of an entry in some foundling registry, which noted the receipt of an infant designated as No. 48, and described said infant's general looks and attire. The description of looks might have suited any child with fair hair and blue eyes. The description of the clothes marked them as such as a woman of the poorer classes would put on her child.

The other paper—there were but two—was a copy of an acknowledgment, signed by Salaris Vivian, to the effect that he had become responsible for the future of No. 48.

Claude clenched his teeth and grow cold.

"I am No. 48—you pretend that?"

"I can swear to it, if necessary."

"Do you tell me that you have passed upon Madame Revere as her own son all these years the child of a woman in the lowest ranks in life, as evidently 48 was?"

"I never told Madame the child was hers."

"You led her to infer it."

"Not at all. I only told her the boy's name was Claude Revere. I named him so. Why not? As well that name as any."

"I see, sir," said Claude, his voice tremulous with rage and shame; "you have played this game very well indeed, and you think yourself sure to win it. But you may lose, after all."

Salaris bowed gravely.

"I don't see your cause of complaint. Do you not pass for the son of a lady of wealth and position? Have you not means furnished you to support that position creditably? Really, it seems to me you are unreasonable to fret because you are not Lord Neville, when you might have stayed the son of the hod-carrier."

There was neither sneer nor sarcasm in Salaris's cold, polished tones. But it did not need that.

For a moment it seemed, as he spoke, that rage would strangle the haughty young man before him.

He the son of a hod-man? He, the high-bred, the aristocrat, the sensitive exquisite, the exclusive gentleman, whose pride in his high birth had been his characteristic?

"It is false!" he cried, hoarsely. "Will you tell me," he continued, clenching his shaking hands, "if Sir Angus Saville is a foundling also, whose true name is a number?"

"I would tell you nothing concerning Sir Angus Saville's antecedents if I knew them," was Salaris's calm reply.

"Is Sir Angus the heir, or am I?" demanded Claude, fiercely.

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that, in spite of your clever foundling story, I believe either Sir Angus or myself to be the rightful heir of the title and estates of Lord Neville."

"I know nothing to the contrary, sir," said Salaris, quite unmoved. "You have only to prove it."

At this moment a desperate hand shook the door, and a woman's voice called, sharply:

"Claude, Claude!"

"Madame Revere?" exclaimed Salaris. "I was not aware that she came with you."

"She did not," Claude replied, looking furious. "What was the woman thinking of to come here?"

CHAPTER VIII.

Known mischiefs have their cure, but doubts have none;
And better is despair than fruitless hope.

Mix'd with a killing fear. *Cleopatra*

SALARIS opened the door. It was indeed Madame Revere. A frenzy of fear had suddenly assailed her as to the probable result of this meeting between Claude and her enemy, and she had followed on a frantic impulse, which she repented now as she met Claude's looks of desperate reproach and Salaris's stern and terrible glances.

"What have you been telling him?" she demanded of Salaris.

"You had left me nothing to tell, Madame," said Salaris's satirical voice.

Madame shuddered, and leaned against the carved door-post. As she did so Lady Saville stepped saucily forward.

Salaris's brow darkened.

"It was, then, you who conducted this woman hither?" he asked. "No one else would dare."

Lady Saville pouted, but she stood her ground. She looked so bright and fascinating as she stood there in her wayward young beauty that Salaris's look softened a little, and, catching the change, the lady daintily put her tiny foot over the threshold she knew she was forbidden to cross at that time.

She was like a frolicsome, spoiled, naughty child. "Audrey?" Salaris said, in a low, reproving voice, bending his stately head towards the pretty creature.

"Give me the ponies and chariot, and I'll go," she whispered.

"You shall have them."

"The black ones?"

"Yes."

"And the chariot with the pearl panels and rose hangings?"

"Yes, yes."

Lady Saville laughed at his impatient tone. Then she said "Thank you," very demurely for her, and walked away.

Madame Revere had meantime crossed over to Claude. But, with a muttered exclamation of anger, he turned his back upon her.

Madame clasped her hands and waited with a rigid face.

"Have you told him that he was not my son?" she demanded of Salaris as Lady Saville vanished from the room.

An icy smile was the only reply Salaris gave her. He felt no pity for this wretched woman who he believed had sent another to death so pitilessly. The great study of his life had been to punish her, in the only way he could, through her affection for her child. He comprehended that there had been some sort of an explanation between Madame Revere and Claude, and that the result of that explanation had been to convince her that he was really her son.

With his icy smile he once more uprooted that conviction.

Madame's wild eyes turned imploringly.

"Claude," she cried, "Claude, is it true?"

Claude Revere answered her with his face still averted.

"Madame," he said, slowly, "there was another child. He is living. He is called Sir Angus Saville. Ask him."

With a contemptuous smile, Salaris touched a bell. A servant answered it instantly.

"Ask Sir Angus Saville to step hither."

The man vanished.

Madame Revere had refused a seat, angrily. She stood with her hands locked before her, her eyes fastened upon the door.

It opened and Sir Angus Saville entered.

He was slight, and elegantly built, handsome as a young Adonis, with eyes a little darker than his hair, which was a rich brown, and waved slightly. There was a tinge of melancholy in his fine, manly face, but it rather added to than detracted from its charm.

Madame's agitation was so great that her lips twitched constantly, but she gave no other sign as she waited for his eyes to fall upon her. Perhaps she imagined that at the moment he did so some chord would vibrate in the souls of each which would be to each a revelation.

But the eager, bright brown eyes met hers with only the natural and respectful curiosity of a young man beholding for the first time a handsome woman under somewhat extraordinary circumstances.

Lady Saville, who was a wonderful gossip, had been chattering about madame and her son already. Salaris presented him.

"Madame wished to know you," he explained.

He spoke sternly.

Sir Angus looked surprised.

"Madame honours me," he said.

"Madame perhaps imagines she knew your mother. She hopes, perhaps, to trace in your face a resemblance to some dear dead friend," Salaris resumed, in a satirical voice, when madame, instead of replying to the young man, only stared at him.

"Is it so, madame?" exclaimed Sir Angus, his brown eyes flashing, and, as if carried away by an irresistible impulse, he kissed the miserable woman's hand before she could hinder him.

Madame Revere stammered some broken words, turning deadly pale.

It was a frightful position. In front of her stood that terrible man, whom she had such cause to fear. His eyes never left her face—and on either hand were the two, one of whom she believed to be her son, the other the child of the woman whose death she had contrived.

Which was her son—which the child of the murdered woman? It was too much.

Madame Revere staggered as she tried to leave the room.

Sir Angus flashed a look of amazement and indignation when he saw that Claude did not move, and himself sprang to her side.

But, recovering herself suddenly, madame rejected his proffered assistance, and, hurrying through the house, entered a carriage which waited for her, and was driven home.

Claude followed her almost immediately.

Sir Angus stayed, slowly pacing the purple-draped corridor outside the room in which Salaris sat again with closed door.

The face of the young man was very pale, his eyes unusually bright, but not happy.

Salaris came out at last. He started slightly at the sight of Sir Angus; and a slight expression of mingled tenderness and regret softened his marble features for an instant.

"You here?" he said, pleasantly, the next moment.

"Yes, sir, yes," Sir Angus replied, softly, sadly, turning a glance of penetrating melancholy upon Salaris. "I was thinking of my mother."

The same look of regretful compassion filled Salaris's eyes again.

"Are you not happy, Angus?"

The young man sighed, and shook his head.

"You should be. You have youth, you have money, you have a beautiful and adored wife."

An unmistakably bitter smile crossed Sir Angus's chiselled lips.

"An adored wife! Ah, yes, an adored wife!" he said. He added, after a pause: "I wanted to ask you, Mr. Vivian, if you think Madame Revere could ever have known my mother? As she left me she whispered me to come and see her. Shall I go?"

"Go, by all means."

Salaris stood thoughtful after Sir Angus had left him.

"Is he fretting about his mother or his wife?" he said to himself. "Audrey is a terrible flirt—perverse and wayward, capricious, obstinate, and reckless—above of those girls that men go crazy about, and, above all, one of those natures that delight in the torture of men. Can Angus be jealous?"

(To be continued.)

HAILSTONES.—Hailstones are frozen raindrops, and a raindrop falling through a vacuum would of necessity be spherical; but in falling through the air it must tend to assume the form of least resistance, whatever that may be.

The size of the tracts of land under tea cultivation will be readily conceived when we say that an acre, on which are 1200 plants, will yield about 1200

pounds of dry tea yearly. Four pounds, weight of green leaves are required to make one pound of dry tea.

TRESSILIAN COURT.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"A Life at Stake," "The House of Secrets," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XIII.

JASPER LOWDER had scarcely composed his features to the expression which he deemed proper to the occasion, when Sir Arthur Tressilian returned to the drawing-room, accompanied by his ward.

Lowder arose and advanced a few paces to meet them, a great agitation again assailing him.

Blanche advanced towards him, childlike and lovely, an airy little vision, with blushes in her clear cheeks, her frank gray eyes uplifted to his shyly, and with conscious appealing.

Lowder stared at her with a rapt admiration.

"The very incarnation of my ideal!" he thought.

"How wondrously fair and lovely she is!"

With a strange, deep glow on his face, Lowder extended his hand, exclaiming:

"This is the Blanche of my dreams. What a glorious coming home!"

He made a movement as if to salute her lips, scarcely knowing what might be expected of the supposed returned heir, but the maiden instinctively evaded the caress. To her a kiss was something too sacred to be lightly asked or given. A kiss exchanged between herself and Guy Tressilian, she thought in the depths of her innocent soul, could only be a kiss of betrothal.

The greeting, elaborate on the part of Lowder, shy and embarrassed on that of the maiden, was soon over, and Blanche ventured to look up into the young man's face.

Guy Tressilian had been for years the hero of her dreams. She had invested him with every noble quality. Now all that halo of her ardent imagination enveloped the man who had usurped Guy's place.

"You have greatly changed, Mr. Tressilian," she said, withdrawing her trembling hand from his.

"Mr. Tressilian!" echoed Lowder, reproachfully.

"Have I outgrown the name of Guy? Or do you intend to teach me that my five years' absence has made me a stranger to the friends of my boyhood?"

"Oh, no, no," protested Blanche, in confusion. "I—I thought—the years have not left us the boy and girl we were when you went away. But if it sounds too formal and cold to call you Mr. Tressilian, I will address you as Guy. And you must call me Blanche as you used to do."

"It is a compact, then," said Lowder, smiling. "I hope you do not find me changed for the worse?"

"I will not flatter you vainly by telling you my opinion," said Blanche, laughing, and blushing anew. "But pardon me. You look tired. Would you not like to go to your room? Good-night!"

Sir Arthur came at her call.

"Your trunks have been taken up to your rooms, Guy. I suppose you renewed your wardrobe in Paris, on your way home from Marseilles? Would you like to go upstairs to renovate your toilette?"

Lowder replied in the affirmative, and Sir Arthur, linking the young man's arm in his, conducted him from the drawing-room, across the great hall, up the grand staircase to a suite of apartments fronting the extensive lawn and avenue, and having side windows looking upon the lawn and the Severn.

"Your old room, my boy," said Sir Arthur, opening the door and ushering Lowder into a beautiful octagon parlour, suitable with its dainty furniture for a lady's boudoir. "Ah, you notice how changed it is? That is Blanche's doing. After I wrote, some three weeks ago, desiring your return, Blanche conceived the idea of fitting up your rooms anew. She always has her way, you know. She was the busiest little housewife for a whole week. You can see the effect for yourself. I will leave you to admire it. You will find us in the drawing-room when you come down. Luncheon will be served in half an hour."

With another affectionate embrace of his supposed son, Sir Arthur withdrew, descending to the drawing-room, where Blanche awaited him.

Left to himself, Lowder walked through the rooms assigned to him, regarding their appointments critically. It was evident that the baronet's ward had had carte-blanche for her purposes. The carpets of sitting-room, bedroom, and dressing-room were alike, of velvet, of a moss-green tint, sprinkled with star-white blossoms with branches of trailing vines. The furniture of the sitting-room was upholstered in green reps, and a luxurious sofa, great roomy arm-chairs, a lounging chair, and Turkish cushions and hassocks, gave an air of luxurious ease to the apartment. A fire, needed on the wild November day, added its brightness to the room. The windows, of which

there were four, were curtained with lace and with silk, the latter of a moss-green tint.

The dressing-room was equally well furnished. The bedroom faced the river, and contained but little furniture besides the sumptuous bedstead that stood in the centre of the apartment, shrouded in folds of lace that depended gracefully from a gilt crown suspended above it.

"A nice berth!" muttered Lowder as he proceeded to take out a change of garments from his trunks. "It was a lucky chance that put me here in poor Guy's place. Sir Arthur is younger looking than I imagined, although I had studied his photograph carefully. I was nearly stunned when I saw him there on the portico. For the life of me I could hardly tell if he were the baronet or some friend of the family. But his agitation and manner almost immediately reassured me. I flatter myself I did my part well, as well even as the genuine Guy could have done. I have hoodwinked Sir Arthur and Blanche. The rest will be easy. I am the acknowledged heir of Tressilian Court. At last—at last—I have a name, fortune, and position. Some day I shall be Sir Guy Tressilian! Well done for the penniless, nameless, so-called Jasper Lowder!"

He hastened to dress himself with the most scrupulous care and taste. Then he secured on his person the gift he had brought for Blanche and the one Guy had purchased for her, and after pausing a few moments at one of the windows to feast his eyes upon the grand estate which he was determined some day to own, he went down to the drawing-room.

"Luncheon is ready, Guy," said Sir Arthur, meeting him at the door. "Give your arm to Blanche, and we will proceed to the dining-room."

Lowder seated Blanche at the oval table, and took possession of the chair that seemed to have been placed for him. Sir Arthur took his place.

Old Purton, the butler, who had been the tutor of the veritable Guy in many a boyish prank, who had taught the true heir to hunt, to fish, and to shoot, who had delighted to rehearse to him the glories of the house of Tressilian, and whom Guy had remembered and loved with the fidelity of an honest, simple nature—old Purton hovered about the pretender with a hungry expression, longing to hear one word of kindly recognition from the one who was the idol of his old heart.

But Lowder, all unconscious, paid no heed to him. Purton, not permitting his assistants to approach the supposed heir, waited upon him himself. His assiduous attentions aroused the attention of Lowder. He encountered the hungry look, the anxious, deprecating expression, and it puzzled him.

Then like a flash came to him the remembrance of Guy's frequent affectionate allusions to "old Purton." This must be he. Inwardly troubled over the blunder he had made, and anxious to retrieve himself even in the old butler's eyes, and conscious that Sir Arthur and Blanche wondered at his non-recognition of the loyal old servant, Lowder called up a glowing smile to his face, and cried out, with seeming heartiness:

"Purton, my dear old fellow, haven't you a word especially for me, who used to be your pride and torment? You haven't changed a bit since the dear old days. Your hand, old fellow!"

"Ah, Mr. Guy," cried Purton, "you have brought the same heart back! Welcome home. It is a happy day that sees you back to your own again!"

He retired hastily to his pantry to indulge a few tears. Lowder, congratulating himself anew on his presence of mind, applied himself to his repast, which was elaborate enough to be called dinner rather than luncheon.

Having escorted Blanche to the drawing-room, and ensconced her in a low chair near the fire, Lowder excused himself, and ran up to his own rooms.

Presently he returned, heavily laden with the rare old volumes he had bought for Sir Arthur in Paris.

Dropping them upon a table, he said, lightly:

"You see, my dear father, how well I have remembered your antiquarian tastes. Here are a few books I bought for you on the Quai de Voltaire, Paris, and not one of them less than a hundred years old. The oddly bound volumes with the cross blazoned on the covers are treatises on the Rosicrucian mysteries. And here is an ancient Herodotus. Here are geographies which bear the date of the period of Christopher Columbus. Here is a volume, with a map, giving a history and description of the fabled Island of Atlantis. I hope you will be pleased with the collection."

Sir Arthur's pleased smile attested that he was surprised as well as delighted at the remembrance of his tastes and the kindly effort to minister to them.

Lowder crossed the room to Blanche's side, and drew a chair close to hers. He bent towards her with an expression of intense admiration for her beaming in his eyes, and declaring itself in his manner. The

flattery of his glances was so subtle and so delicate that Blanche was pleased rather than offended by it.

"I have not forgotten you, Blanche," he said, in a low voice. "I see you wear the pearls I sent you from the Continent. You cannot, therefore, refuse to accept these little supplementary gifts."

He drew from his pocket the square violet velvet case, in which reposed the pearl necklace he had bought for her in Paris. He lifted the ornament from its satin bed, and the firelight played upon the triple string of pearls and upon the facets of the diamond, which, in a wire-like setting, threw a dazzling lustre over the magnificent and costly present.

"Let me clasp it around your neck, little Blanche," said Lowder.

Blanche drooped her head. The usurper passed about the slender neck the string of lustrous gems, and clasped them. His touch seemed to caress the young girl. When she lifted her little golden head again her cheeks were stained with the bright carmine.

"It is a beautiful gift!" she murmured. "As beautiful as precious!"

"But not half so beautiful as its dainty wearer," said Lowder, gallantly. "Some women seem made to wear diamonds. You should always wear pearls, Blanche. But I have something else for you—a mere trifle, but which I hope you will wear."

He put his hand again to his pocket and drew out a tiny velvet box, which, on being opened, was found to contain a diamond ring.

It was a valuable little trinket, the gem being of good size, of a white colour, flawless, and as clear as a drop of spring water in the sunlight. It was exquisitely set, after a most unique fashion, in a manner best calculated to display the stone.

This ring had been bought by Guy Tressilian, and had been designed as a gift to Blanche. Lowder had stolen it from him with Guy's other valuables, after the shipwreck and Guy's injury, as we have described.

Now the arch-pretender offered it as his own present to the young girl.

"You will not refuse it, Blanche?" he asked. "I fancied I read a refusal in your eyes. But as you have taken one gift you cannot refuse the other. Let me tell you the history of this poor little gem. I bought it in Constantinople when I bought your set of pearls. The ring had been made by the Sultan's jeweller for the Sultan's favourite, a fair Circassian. The diamond had been selected by the Sultan himself. The jeweller displayed the ring to me. I liked it. I thought how it would sparkle and gleam on your small finger. The jeweller had another diamond very like this. I offered him more than the value of this ring, and he sold it to me, saying he would set the other stone for 'the pride of the harem.' I brought this ring with me from Constantinople. It accompanied me to Egypt, to Palestine, to Greece, to Italy, and upon that voyage which proved so fatal to poor Lowder. It has proved a talisman of good fortune to me, and I shall like it better than ever if you will wear it."

He turned the ring to and fro in the soft blaze of the fire. Blanche's hand fluttered towards him. He took it in his, and gently put the ring on the forefinger of her left hand—the betrothal finger.

Perhaps he did not remember that custom has prescribed that a maiden shall wear the sign of her betrothal upon that finger. But Blanche hardly remembered it.

"It is strange that this ring should have survived your shipwreck," said Blanche.

"Not so; for I carried it on my person. I lost all my luggage that was on the felucca, of course, but my greatest treasures were on my person. My purse was unharmed. I cannot say as much for these precious missives," and he displayed a tiny packet of stained, worn letters, bound together with faded blue ribbon. "The sea-water has coloured them."

He turned the packet so that Blanche could recognise them as her own letters to Guy, which she did.

"You see how I have read them," and he smiled. "My father's letters fared no better. Indeed, some of them are almost illegible."

As he restored the letters to his pocket, Blanche arose and went to her guardian.

"Dear guardy," said the girl, "see this ring Guy has bought me. It has an odd little history. Guy bought it before his shipwreck."

Sir Arthur examined the trinket, while Blanche vivaciously repeated the story concerning it which Lowder had told her. Then, with a pale, grave face, but with a most unselfish heart, the baronet replaced the ring upon her finger.

"Guardy, Guy has all our letters with him," said Blanche, looking over the old books with Sir Arthur. "They are all stained with sea-water, but he has preserved them as if they were priceless."

Lowder seized the opportunity to confirm her

words, bringing out the letters again, with others that had been written by the baronet. He intended that the display should be an unobtrusive point in favour of his pretensions as the baronet's son. Sir Arthur and Blanche fancied that they saw in it a token of the affectionate disposition that had characterized Guy's boyhood.

"It did me good to witness old Parmiton's joy when I spoke to him at luncheon," remarked Lowder, carelessly, putting away the letters. "Dear old fellow! He knew me at once. I half fancied that I should not know him. That shock and injury consequent upon the shipwreck half paralysed my memory. But the moment I looked at Parmiton closely the remembrance of his old stories came back to me, and I felt myself a boy again!"

The baronet smiled.

"You are as enthusiastic as ever, Guy," he said.

"Yes, I fear I shall never outgrow my boyish enthusiasm," said Lowder, laughing. "When I saw good, motherly Mrs. Goss, I could but think of the surreptitious sweetmeats with which she would beguile me to her room in those old childish days. My gratitude for her toothsome dainties has outlived all shocks to my brain. I must find my way to the housekeeper's room by-and-by."

"Do you remember little Cressy, whom Mrs. Goss took from the charity school?" asked Blanche. "Cressy is my maid now. She remembers you well, Guy, because you always spoke so kindly to her."

"The household has changed little since you went away, Guy," said Sir Arthur; "the old home still less. As soon as the weather clears you must take a ramble with Blanche over the estate. I bought for you, a month since, a magnificent saddle horse, a thoroughbred. It is in the stable now, awaiting your pleasure. You will find hunters there, and dogs in the kennels. You have only to make yourself happy and contented with our simple English living, and I don't doubt but it will be pleasant to you after your university life and year of travel."

"It will indeed be pleasant," said Lowder. "I have learned to enjoy my home, if I have learned little else."

"I suppose," said Sir Arthur, who was always thoughtful of the feelings of the least of those in his employ, "that you are anxious to see good Mrs. Goss, who tried her best to spoil you in your childhood. No doubt Parmiton has rehearsed to her your kindly recognition of himself, and excited her jealousy. You can go to her room, if you wish, Guy, but don't be gone long. I am not able to lose you long from my sight yet, and I would send for Mrs. Goss, only that I know you would rather see her alone."

Lowder looked blank at this proposal.

But as it seemed to Sir Arthur and Blanche the most natural thing in the world that he should desire to see the old housekeeper, hear her, smile, and declared that he would surprise the good woman with a visit.

But once out in the hall and alone, his brow darkened, and he muttered:

"Curse the lack! How am I to find the housekeeper's room, I'd like to know, without betraying my ignorance of the house? This is a predicament!"

CHAPTER XIV.

WHILE his false friend, Jasper Lowder, was thus settling into the place rightfully belonging to Guy Tressilian, stealing from him home, heritage, and friends, and abandoning him to a terrible fate, the baronet's son did not find himself utterly friendless.

Mrs. Vicini regarded her gentle, silent charge with the care and tenderness of a mother. Providence had denied her children, but nature had given her a tender, motherly soul. The care of poor, melancholy Guy seemed to fill up the long-mourned void in her life. Tomaso was absent in his little fishing vessel much of the time, in pursuance of his business, and Teresa was much alone. It was natural, therefore, that she should become greatly attached to her stricken inmate.

As he liked not to talk, and had indeed forgotten his former knowledge of the Italian language, speaking only English when he spoke at all, the good woman made no attempts to converse with him. But she cared assiduously for his toilette, and Guy had never presented a more gentlemanly appearance than now. His wound was so bandaged and cared for as to be not at all repulsive. He was always quiet, always courteous, always refined, delicate, and gentlemanly.

He rewarded Mrs. Vicini's care by an evident affection, which flattered the motherly peasant woman to the depths of her soul.

But there was one he loved with something of the ardour that had characterized his nature in its happier days.

That one was Olla.

It was not a lover's devotion he gave to the slender, jetty-haired young girl, with her clear olive

cheeks and passionate dark eyes, but rather the worship the devotee yields his saint. Day after day he sat upon the rocks on the edge of the bluff, his sad, wistful eyes fixed upon the valley below, watching for Olla's coming.

The only smiles that ever came to his lips, the only tears that ever sprang to his eyes, were caused by Olla's appearance, or Olla's songs. It seemed indeed as if she alone had power to make the half-palsied chords of his sensibility vibrate, as if she alone had power to stir into the faintest semblance of life his sleeping soul.

Olla never failed the patient watcher on the lonely bluff. Every morning, whether it rained or whether the sun shone, she visited him with an unfailing regularity. She brought him oranges, figs, grapes, and almonds. She also brought him pictures, in which he seemed to find pleasure.

She sang to him all the quaint old English and Scotch ballads she knew, her Tyrolean carols and bits of Italian opera, and poor Guy never wearied of her singing. He would listen to the music in a sort of ecstasy, and it was then, and only then, that a gleam of anything like intelligence came to his sad, sphinx-like eyes. It was then, and only then, that his tears came.

Olla's interest in Tressilian deepened day by day. The life which had seemed to her so useless, but which had been in reality as silently beneficent as the sunlight, became ennobled now with her kindly deeds. It would be wrong to say that she loved Guy as women love those whom they marry. She had a strong, active and cultivated intellect, and in a lover she demanded one intellectually her equal. But she pitied the poor fellow—pitied him with a strange, deep, yearning tenderness that was full of pain. She loved him too with a protecting love, such as a large-hearted woman accords to one who is helpless, and who has claims upon her love. It seemed to Olla that Tressilian had claims upon her, in his loneliness and great affliction.

She was not his only visitor. Jacopo Palestro, the scrivener of Palermo, the distant kinsman of Teresa Vicini, came often to the fisherman's cottage, ostensibly to visit his kinswoman, but really to make inquiries concerning Tressilian. The scrivener was anxious, it seemed, to earn the money paid him by Jasper Lowder for acting as a spy and reporter.

Tressilian instinctively shrank from Palestro as if some vague instinct warned him that in the scrivener he had an enemy. He would never reply to Palestro's inquiries, even when made in English, with which language Palestro was tolerably familiar.

Palestro came out to the Vicini cottage a few days subsequent to the visit of Mr. Devereux Gower to Tressilian, but at a later hour of the day. He rowed from Palermo in a small boat.

As usual, Guy shrank away from him as if he had been a serpent. The scrivener, having questioned Mrs. Vicini, was informed of Doctor Spozzo's final opinion regarding "the young Inglesse."

The scrivener was well dressed, and displayed a watch and a massive chain. He also wore a seal ring and a shirt pin set with an amethyst.

"Have you fallen heir to a fortune, Jacopo?" inquired the fisherman's wife, with considerable curiosity. "I never saw you so fine before."

"My business pays well," returned the scrivener, too cautious to tell her from whom or for what he had received his sudden prosperity. "As you say, I have fallen heir to a pretty little sum lately. I'm thinking, Teresa, it's time I enjoyed life a little. I'm getting up in the world, and I would like to exhibit my good fortune to those who knew me when I was out at elbows."

"That's human nature," said Teresa, cheerfully. "But where did you get the money from, Jacopo? We have no relatives to leave fortunes."

"Perhaps you have not," returned Jacopo Palestro, superciliously. "But I had an uncle in Messina, a fruit merchant, who had laid by a pretty penny. But to come back to what I was about to say. You remember that when I went to Naples last year I fell in love with a young woman named Giuditta Carvelli?"

"Yes, I remember."

"I asked her to marry me," pursued the scrivener, reflectively, "but she rejected me. She was the heiress of a fine vineyard, and would not look upon a poor scrivener. I was in a fine rage, of course. I twisted Giuditta of her brigand relatives. Her brother is a brigand chief, you know, the 'Red Carvelli' they call him. But Giuditta flashed out at me. She said if I would bring her an income of two thousand francs a year, and come and keep the inn that she has inherited with her vineyard, and which she keeps alone, she would marry me, but not otherwise. I told her as well ask me to fetch Mount Etna to her. Then I came away indignant at her pride. But times have changed. I have the two thousand francs a year, and a thousand to spare—"

"Impossible, Jacopo! Ah, you were ever a boaster."
 "I swear it is true, Teresa. The old uncle who died the other day in Messina has left me the sum I mentioned. Now my mind turns to Giuditta and the thrifty little inn at Naples. Ah, one could make a fortune there. The port, pretty, gossiping Giuditta is as saving as a miser. They love money, that family, from the brigand 'Red Carvelli' down to Giuditta. A nice berth for a poor fellow like me!"
 "Yes, indeed," said Teresa Vicini, half enviously.
 "When shall you go to Naples?"
 "To-morrow, Teresa, in one of the Messrs. Florio's steamers."

"But perhaps the pretty Giuditta is married?"
 "Ah, no," cried the scrivener, fumbling a letter in his pocket. "I wrote to her some days ago, asking if the old bargain held good. Now I have got her answer to-day saying that it does hold good, and if I have got two thousand francs income I can come on to Naples. I have engaged my passage. I have come to ask a favour of you, Teresa."

"Well, what is it?"
 "It is but a small thing," said the scrivener, fidgeting a little. "It is but to ask that you will write to me weekly while I am gone. I shall come to Palermo once a month. For the rest of the time, write to me and keep me informed of the news."
 "But I cannot write, and I shall have no news to tell you."

"I will pay the hire of a scrivener," said Palestro, eagerly. "Or the pretty, black-eyed Inglessa, who comes to see the poor demented, will write for you. She speaks our language well. As to the news, tell me of Tomaso's hauls at his fishing, and the gossip of the neighbourhood—and—ad—coming to the real point of his visit, of the poor young Inglessa who sits out on the rocks like a statue. I have taken much interest in him. I would like to hear how he thrives and all he does."

He took from his pocket a five-franc piece, tossing it to Mrs. Vicini, who caught it, and said:

"I do not see how you can help feeling interested in the poor, unfortunate, Jacopo, and I will get a letter written to you every week. I wish you joy of your fine bride, and I hope you will prosper."

"As I shall," cried the scrivener. "Now I'll say adieu. Remember me to Tomaso, the industrious. It would kill me to work as he works."

He said farewell, and took his leave.

He halted beside Tressilian and addressed him a few words, receiving no answer. The sad, impassible face might have been carved of stone, it was so preternaturally grave, so devoid of all human interest.

"I'll find him like that fifty years from now," muttered Palestro, descending the bluff to his waiting boat. "He is my bank; my stock-in-trade; my capital, on which I draw three thousand francs annual interest. Teresa will keep me informed of his progress. Now for Naples and Giuditta!"

He entered his boat, and rowed back to Palermo. The next day he departed from Palermo to Naples.

For a few days subsequent there occurred no further incident of consequence bearing upon the life or destiny of Guy Tressilian.

A week after Palestro's departure there came to Teresa Vicini a letter from her kinsman, informing her that he was to be married to his "thrifty Giuditta" in a fortnight, and inviting her to attend the wedding.

This letter Mrs. Vicini displayed to Olla Rymple on her next visit, and Olla good-naturedly answered it for her, declining, in Teresa's name, the invitation, and informing the scrivener that the brown goat was ill of some strange sickness, that Signora Villetti had lost the younger of her pair of twin sons, and that "the poor Inglessa" was about the same—no better, no worse, but as gentle and courteous and silent as ever.

Mrs. Vicini carried the missive to Palermo and posted it that very afternoon, at the same time that Tomaso transported thither the results of his last fishing expedition.

It was on the morning subsequent to this letter-writing that Olla, setting out with her usual attendants, upon her usual expedition in the direction of the Cape di Gallo, encountered her guardian upon the terrace.

The girl was looking very lovely and very piquant in her short poplin costume, with her jaunty jacket and small hat. A pink flush tinged her usually colourless, not pallid cheeks. Her eyes glowed with dusky splendour. She was bright, sunny, and bewitching.

Mr. Gower stared at her admiringly.

"A word with you, Olla," he said, pleasantly. "The morning is fine. You have no need to hurry."

"Very well," replied Olla, smiling. "What have you to say to me, Mr. Gower that you could not say at the breakfast table?"

"You shall hear. But first dismiss your worthy Popleys—the pair of them—for a few moments. They can retire to the porch."

He made a gesture to his man Krigger, who stood in the background, with the great Russian hound snapping savagely at his heels, and man and dog retreated to the porch.

Mrs. Popley and her son, obeying Olla's request, retreated to the same spot.

"Well?" said Olla, with an inquisitive arching of her regular, jetty brows. "We are alone now. What have you to say?"

"Come down the terrace with me toward the sea, Olla," said Mr. Gower. "See the morning sunlight on the waters! What a gloriously beautiful scene!"

Olla looked at her guardian suspiciously.

"Was it to listen to a rhapsody about the beauties of nature that you stopped me?" she asked. "I see no fault in the weather," she added, with mischievous practicality. "The sea looks as it ever does, blue and restless. I am always suspicious of people who begin a conversation by eulogies on the weather and scenery when there is something really to be said," she concluded, smiling.

Mr. Gower bit his lips.

"I will come to the point," he remarked. "Have you noticed that the consul's family have not called upon you? That not one of the English residents at Palermo has called upon you?"

"Well, yes, I have noticed it. But what of it?"

"You have attended church services every Sunday," continued Mr. Gower, "but the English chaplain has called upon you but once. Do you know why?"

"I do not. I have given but little thought to the matter. To get acquainted with one's own country-people it is necessary to have introductory letters, and I suppose you had not those, as you had no intention of coming to Palermo."

"I was acquainted with the consul, however. I had my credentials with me. A gentleman, a wealthy landowner, a member of Parliament, I find it easy to make desirable acquaintances."

"Then why don't the people you mention call?" inquired Olla. "If they are assured of your respectability, I should think they would like to make your acquaintance."

"I have made several acquaintances," returned Mr. Gower. "The truth is, Olla, the reason people do not call is connected with you!"

"Indeed!" said Olla. "Am I an egotist, that I frighten them away? Or do they not know who I am?"

"Yes, they know that you are Miss Olla Rymple, my ward, a great heiress, the owner of fine estates in England, and as beautiful a girl as England ever produced. But the truth is, Olla, that I have caused to be quietly circulated a report that you are out of your mind—non compos, as the lawyers say. People are afraid of you."

Olla's beautiful face flamed with indignation.

"How dare you circulate such a report?" she cried. "Now I understand why the gentlemen have dared to stare at me so boldly on our drives on the Marina, and why the ladies have looked at me so pityingly. It was a dastardly act, Mr. Devereux Gower."

"All things are fair in love and war," said Mr. Gower, coolly. "It was a desperate ruse, but it succeeded. People do not think you a maniac, my dear, but a little 'touched,' you know—just over the boundary that divides sense from lunacy."

The flush faded from Olla's face, leaving her very pale. She comprehended that such a belief as Gower had inculcated only placed her the more completely in his power.

"I must set this straight," she said, desperately.

"When the English chaplain calls again I will disabuse his mind of his belief in my lunacy."

"Impossible, my dear Olla. When the chaplain took leave of me at the outer door, the other day, and I asked his sympathy in my grief at your malady, he remarked upon the 'unnatural brilliancy' of your eyes, and the 'unnatural vivacity and gravity' that characterised your manner by turns. He will not come again. Everybody supposes that the three servants and that great hound are sent to protect you on your rambles, and that without them the poor young heiress would surely destroy herself, or meet with some terrible fate. I have taken every precaution, Olla, to hem you in; and I have succeeded. My household is devoted to me. Your going and coming are at my pleasure."

"What do you propose by this state of affairs?"

"Your hand in marriage!"

Olla recoiled a few paces.

"You told me that you would never speak to me of love again!" she exclaimed.

"That promise was but a stratagem. I meant to gain time, and I have gained it. You are in my power. Your servants are not able to aid you, for

they will neither of them be permitted to leave the premises unless I choose to send them away from the island. The persecutions at Naples, of which you complained so bitterly, and from which you fled to Palermo, will be outdone by the new persecutions I will devise for you if you again defy me!"

The tiger in his nature leaped to the surface; his eyes gleamed luridly; his teeth showed between his parted lips in a savage expression.

Olla shrank from him.

"I have talked love to you until I am weary," he cried, menacingly. "I have made you presents, have courted you like any Romeo, but you rejected me. My love is no weak passion, to be easily uprooted, Olla. It is no light summer zephyr, but, instead, a tornado, a whirlwind! I love you! I have sworn to marry you!"

The girl's passionate eyes glowed with spirit. Her lip curled in a dauntless smile.

"You are a pleasant wooer," she said. "Is it I, or my fortune, that you are so eager to possess?"

Gower's eyes blazed at her.

"Both!" he cried, recklessly. "I have been gentle and tender, and full of sighs. Bah! the way to woo a defiant, scornful little creature like you is to woo as they do in Tartary, or some other of those half-civilised and uncivilised countries. There they take a wife by force. I shall do the same."

"The customs of this country are, unfortunately for you, quite different," said Olla. "You should have taken me to Tartary, my dear guardian. Evidently you are fitted for an uncivilised community. I did not know, until your mask dropped from you at this moment, what a consummate villain, hypocrite, and savage you are!"

"You don't know yet!" exclaimed Gower, again showing his glittering, pointed teeth. "I have played the gentle guardian until I am sick of the rôle. I have allowed you to ramble about the country; to visit that—that English idiot out near the Cape; to gratify your desire to be a Sister of Charity, a Lady Bountiful—what you would; and all the while I smiled and talked I was weaving my own schemes. I can wait no longer. You are in a trap, my lovely Olla. The only way out of it is to become my wife."

Olla was almost stunned at the turn affairs had taken. Mr. Gower's outbreak was like a sudden clap of thunder through a clear sky. She had felt so safe of late, so busy, so happy. This was the end.

"My answer is the same as before, Mr. Gower," she said, in a low, throbbing voice. "You know I will never be your wife."

"We will see if that spirit of yours cannot be broken! Until you consent to marry me, your freedom is a thing of the past. You will be a prisoner in your own rooms. Permit me to escort you to them."

A mutinous look crept into the girl's stormy eyes. She looked at her guardian rebelliously.

He pointed silently towards the villa.

There were Mrs. Popley and her son, all anxiety and excitement over the strange scene they were witnessing, but of which they could not hear a word.

There also was Krigger and the great Russian hound, who was lapping his jaws hungrily. Beside Krigger was the Sicilian coachman and the stout Sicilian housekeeper, both watching their master intently, and ready to bound towards him at a gesture.

"You see?" said Gower.

The girl averted her face. A sense of her powerlessness rendered her weak and faint.

Mr. Gower drew her arm in his, and led her past the group of awe-struck servants into the villa.

Mrs. Popley followed him.

He took the girl up to her own rooms and ushered her into them. Mrs. Popley slipped in also.

"I shall lock your door," said Mr. Gower.

"Krigger will bring you your meals. For the present, Mrs. Popley can remain with you. I warn you, Olla, that you had better learn the lesson speedily that I am master!"

He withdrew, locked the door, and put the key in his pocket.

Then the prisoners heard him go down the stairs.

Mrs. Popley ran to the window and looked out.

Krigger and the Russian hound were lounging below.

"Oh, Miss Olla!" cried the poor old woman, in an agony. "What does this mean? What is Mr. Gower going to do?"

"It is a war between us—the old war!" said Olla, throwing herself on a couch. "If I resist him, he means me to perish. If I yield, I shall also die! But in my own misery I cannot forget poor Jasper Lowder. He is waiting for me at this moment on the cliff, eager, anxious, watchful. I cannot go to him. I can never, never see him again unless I promise to marry Mr. Gower. Oh, nurse, I seem to be tasting the bitterness of death!"

(To be continued.)

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

JENNY LIND.—In the LONDON READER, published February 4th, we inserted a paragraph from a New York journal, "Woodhull and Claflin's Weekly." We are informed that the whole story is without foundation, and we regret that it should have been copied into our columns; and tender our most sincere apologies to the parties mentioned for any annoyance which may have been occasioned to them by the publication of the paragraph.

F. F. (Aldershot).—No charge is made.

A. W. R.—There was no such office at the date referred to, neither is there now.

HATTIE.—The style of the writing would be good if the letters were more firmly formed.

DIAMOND.—Your request was complied with soon after the receipt of your first letter.

GRACE E.—We cannot form any judgment as to the merits of the whole by a perusal of a portion.

DAISY.—1. The handwriting is admirable. 2. The whole of Tennyson's poems are now contained in any single volume.

C. B. (Worcester).—You should make arrangements with a letterpress printer in your own locality. We cannot help you in the matter.

PADDY POTTER.—Had your last attempt been less mesmeric and free from some vulgarisms, it might have been inserted. It is not without merit.

E. S.—The stencil plates cost about two shillings each, and can be had at colour shops where grainers' brushes and other materials are sold. The dealer in your town should procure them through his London agent.

J. D.—The strict meaning of the word "Jewellery" is the place where jewels are kept; see an article upon "Misused Words," on page 340 of our present volume. That page will be found in No. 406.

CRUIKSHANK.—To cure knock-knees, have a double-armed crutch made of a suitable size and wear it whenever you are in bed. Being young, you may, if you take pains, overcome the deformity.

RICHARD B.—We have nothing of the exact description written for. The nearest approach are the various dishes to the volumes, which are on sale, price one penny each.

NEWTON'S FRIEND.—Industry is a great virtue. You cannot do better than emulate the example of that young lady in whom it is personified, and upon whom, as is apparent from your letter, you have already fixed your choice.

W. H. H.—A whisper of commendation might be bestowed upon the vivacity of your attempts. You are, probably, sensible that they require a good deal of pruning and polish. The affected orthographical solecisms are eccentric.

W. B.—Perhaps the best thing you can do is to commence reading something about the country in which you live, to which you might order through a bookseller a small edition of the "History of England." There is an edition published by the National Society, which is very good.

FRANCE E. S.—You should apply at the County Court for information as to what happened during your absence. If the case was merely struck out, or if you were non-suited, you might then cause a new summons to issue. If a verdict was entered for the defendant, you must let the matter rest.

H. H.—No outward application is of any avail. The effect is produced either from extreme debility or from too free an indulgence in spirituous liquors. In the former case tonic medicines and a generous diet should be taken, in the latter greater moderation must be observed.

A SUBSCRIBER (Cork).—In Handel's oratorio, "Israel in Egypt," there is a composition relating to the last plague sent upon the Egyptians. It is a chorus, and is entitled, "He smote all the first-born of Egypt." We are unacquainted with any poem on the subject, or upon "Jephtha's Daughter." Should any of our readers have met with such poems, we should feel obliged if they would write us.

PAXTON.—There is probably a good foundation for the conclusion at which you have arrived, for there is not such a street in London as that named in your letter. How your remembrance so directed could have reached any one, or why it was not returned to you through the Dead-letter-office, is a mystery which we cannot explain. That an individual living so far north as you do should not have remembered the axiom about the two bad paymasters, and that he should have been "taken in" is, as

you have endeavoured to convey to us, odd—very odd. It seems almost to transform mystery into a myth. "What ought I to do?" you ask. Evidently you should make a note of the circumstance, and put up with your loss.

WILLIAM W. J.—Many thanks for your communication. The passage is, however, correct. The reverend gentleman in question held the appointment co-temporaneously. You have, perhaps, forgotten the entry there used to be against pluralists. The benefices were doubtless held together long before the amendments of the law on that subject, which amendments were made in 1833, 1850, and 1855.

KENILWORTH.—Articles made of white metal can be polished by a mixture composed of rotten-stone, soft soap, and turpentine. The stone should be powdered fine and sifted, and the other ingredients added in sufficient proportion to form a thick paste. Having washed the articles with hot water, rub a little of the composition over the metal, after which rub it off briskly with a clean rag and polish with wash-leather.

AN OLD SUBSCRIBER (Clifton).—Your better course is to apply to some one of repute in the profession if your neighbourhood. A considerable amount of instruction is requisite, for which corresponding fees must be paid, unless your friend would remain satisfied with an humble position. In this case she should not be advised to change her present mode of life. Those who have succeeded have had relations or friends in the same profession, who have instructed them, watched over them, and, by means of interest, put them forward.

WALTER G.—The last three pieces are an improvement on the first: concerning it, you seem to have misapprehended the criticism which you have certainly misquoted. These last bear evidence of earnest thought and some study. In our opinion, however, the efforts are not sufficiently sustained for such purely descriptive pieces. They are spasmodic studies of sorrow, disappointment, and affection, which might interest the world if the world were acquainted with the author, but which have not in themselves sufficient merit to arouse attention. There are some minor defects which it is unnecessary to notice.

ON THE PRESENT NOT A WRINKLE—1871.

Let Time not be pictured only
With his mantle worn and old,
In his hand a rod of ruin,
Down his breast a gray beard rolled,
To the soul weird desolation
Imaging, while every breath
Is a master's sounding
O'er the confined caves of death.
Let the Past be so unto us;
Let the Present to us be
Young and bright and iron-muscle
As it is upon Life's Sea:
Thus will glow a living picture,
And instead of funeral chime,
We shall hear a trumpet's charges
From the terse, red lips of Time:
Charges for the glorious battle
That with all its sternest strife
Gains a crown for each true vessel
On the earnest Sea of Life.
Old year, sleep in solemn glory:
New year, laugh by Action's shrine—
On the Present not a wrinkle,
Time again in youth divine. W. R. W.

J. R.—The verses jingle tolerably. But your ideas as therein expressed are sadly confused. Why it is that your love "blooms in vain," and how it is that the snow-drops and the rose flourish at the same time, or, as you put it, "live together," are mysteries beyond our comprehension. The poet's pen is a complete work can be had for about a guinea. The works of the other poets referred to cost about a third of that sum. A disquisition on their respective merits would occupy as many columns as we here have room for lines.

CLIMAX.—1. Exercise combined with medicine suited to the constitution. 2. Hard work during the day. 3. The simplest method of relieving the irritation which accompanies an attack of smallpox, and preventing the marks which often remain after the disease has been cured, is to smear the surface of the body, after the eruption is fairly out, with bacon fat. Boil thoroughly a piece of bacon with the skin on, when cold cut off the fat with the skin adhering to it. Score the fat crosswise with a knife, and rub the fat gently over the eruptions twice or thrice a day.

NEWTON.—Your choice must depend upon the estimate you form of your own strength and capability. A beauty will require a stronger arm to protect her and a more perfect man in every respect than will an ordinary-looking lassie. In selecting the former you should, during courtship and afterwards, be always armed cap-a-pie, and resolutely defend your position against all comers. If you are able to do this in a becoming manner, and take care that in no respect do you fall in your duty to her, you are likely to meet with a rich reward, for when to all the virtues beauty is added, the happiness of the husband is materially enhanced, it being assumed that if he perform his duty the wife will not fail in hers. A very great deal depends upon yourself, but forget not that old proverb, "Men cannot gather grapes from thorns, nor figs from thistles."

ALICE, twenty-two, dark, good looking, and loving. Respondent must be loving, and in easy circumstances.

MARY and **NELLIE**, both dark, loving, and domesticated. Respondents must be tall, dark, steady, loving, and not over twenty-two.

W. R. D., tall, dark, good looking, and in the Navy. Respondent must be tall, good looking, and of a loving disposition; a publican's daughter preferred.

Y. F. M., twenty-three, 5ft. 7in., fair, good tempered, affectionate, fond of music, and has a good trade. Respondent must be fair, good looking, and ladylike.

LEMMET, twenty-five, 5ft. 8in., dark hair, blue eyes, good temper, and a working man. Respondent must be me-

dium height, cheerful, affectionate, under twenty, and fond of music.

ANNIE D., eighteen, fair, blue eyes, and Auburn hair. Respondent should be a young gentleman in the army, tall, dark, and with a tolerable income.

MARTHA would like to correspond with a gentleman with a view to matrimony. She would make a loving wife, is of the middle height, and has dark hair and eyes. **HOOK** and **THIMBLE**, twenty, good looking, blue eyes, fair hair, and in the Navy. Respondent must have blue eyes, fair hair, and a loving disposition.

T. P., twenty, 5ft. 7in., dark, handsome, affectionate, fond of music, and has a good salary. Respondent must be about eighteen, good looking, loving, and domesticated.

WHITE CLEMATIS, possessing many attractions and much intelligence, wishes to marry a gentleman, who is mainly, moral, intelligent, refined, between thirty-six and forty-six, and possessing a sure income; it need not be large, as her own fortune is ample.

A. and **B.** would like to correspond with two gentlemen with a view to matrimony. "A," twenty-one, "B," eighteen, of good family, educated, and above the medium height. Respondents should be tall, about twenty-four, and in a good position.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

E. G. is responded to by—"Daisy," nineteen, tall, good features, brown hair, dark gray eyes, good looking, educated, and accustomed to good society—"M. L. H.," eighteen, of good family, educated, and entitled to property—"Eveline," twenty-three, tall, ladylike, brown hair, hazel eyes, fresh complexion, well educated, amiable, affectionate, fond of music and poetry, and is very domesticated; "Kate," good looking, and educated; and—"Lily," medium height, rather dark, loving, and domesticated.

H. B. by—"M. B. S.," cheerful, faithful, and loving. **Moss Rose** by—"S. S.," twenty-four, tall, and dark; will exchange cards.

L. B. by—"Alice," young, pretty, loving, fond of home, and has expectations.

SIMPPLICIA by—"Ernest," eighteen, 5ft. 8in., handsome, fond of music, and very affectionate.

J. C. S. by—"Clara," seventeen, rather tall, good tempered, loving, and fond of home.

Moss Rose by—"T. B.," twenty-two, lightish hair, good prospects, and a tradesman.

HENRY F. by—"Clarissa," eighteen, tall, dark, good tempered, and fond of dancing.

JEWEL BLOCK by—"Violet," nineteen, 5ft. 2in., fair, and domesticated.

JULIA by—"Bob," young, tall, good looking, and can make a home happy.

GRACE by—"Viva," tall, handsome, dark eyes and hair, and good tempered.

CHARLES by—"E. N.," seventeen, medium height, very fair, and pretty.

LAWYER'S CLERK by—"A. F.," seventeen, medium height, very fair, with light Auburn hair.

E. G. by—"Lily," eighteen, medium height, light Auburn hair, violet eyes, and will have money when of age.

H. B. by—"Folite," eighteen, 5ft. 4in., light hair and eyes, good tempered, domesticated, and would make a fond and faithful wife.

JEWEL BLOCK by—"A Tradesman's Daughter," nineteen, medium height, a pretty, blue-eyed blonde, and has every capability of making a good wife.

SPRIGGLY LUCIE by—"Wallflower," twenty-three, dark, good looking, of a good family, fond of the sister arts, and thinks he could make a loving husband.

ANNA by—"A Citizen," who is a merry-hearted fellow, with plenty of money, brown curly hair, and fair complexion; would like to exchange cards.

HAPPY JOHNNY by—"Dewdrop," fair, good looking, and fond of a sailor—"M. A.," light eyes, dark hair, loving, and domesticated; and—"Mary," loving, good looking, good tempered, and a good dancer.

CANNON'S ROAR by—"Sentry Go," 5ft. 7in., fair, brown hair and eyes, has a taste for music, respectably connected, and has been a soldier in the service for six years.

ASTROLOGER by—"Dot," tall, slight, good looking, small pink ears, finely formed teeth, large brown eyes, loving disposition, can cook a dinner, mend a shirt, make clothes, and will have money on her wedding-day.

CHARLES W. by—"Bella Leonora," eighteen, fair, loving, and merry hearted—"C. T.," of good family, musical, educated, and will have a marriage portion.

AMY ROBERT, a pretty little fair girl of seventeen, bright blue eyes, long dark eyelashes, sunny golden curls, small mouth, even white teeth, small waist, hands, and feet, intelligent, and respectably connected—"Agnes," seventeen, rather tall, fair, blue eyes, amiable, and affectionate; and—"Adeline," seventeen, medium height, dark hair and eyes, rosy complexion, of good family, musical, loving, and cheerful.

LOVELY MAGGIE wishes to hear from "J. S. B." **EMILY**, twenty-two, amiable, nice looking, and educated; would like to receive the photograph of "E. G."

EVERYBODY'S JOURNAL, Parts 1 to 4, Price Threepence each. **THE LONDON READER**, Post-free Three-halfpence Weekly; or Quarterly One Shilling and Eightpence.

Now Ready, VOL. XV. of THE LONDON READER, Price 4s. 6d. Also, the TITLE and INDEX to VOL. XV. Price One Penny.

NOTICE.—Part 94, for MARCH, Now Ready, price 7d., with large Supplement Sheet of the Fashions for March.

N.B.—CORRESPONDENTS MUST ADDRESS THEIR LETTERS TO THE EDITOR OF "THE LONDON READER," 334, Strand, W.C.

We cannot undertake to return Rejected Manuscripts. As they are sent to us voluntarily, authors should retain copies.

MUSLIN EMBROIDERY, BERTHE, VISITING CARD CASE, IMITATION POINT LACE, COLLAR WITH JABOT, &c., &c.

EDGING IN EMBROIDERY.—No. 1.

This edging is worked on tulle and mull muslin. The latter is used as appliqué, and when the pattern is carefully secured in embroidery cut away all the superfluous muslin.

ROSETTE IN CROCHET.—No. 2.

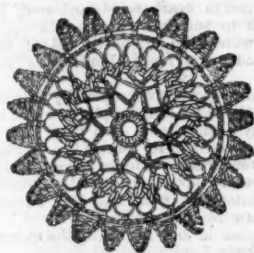
GUIMPE is the material used for these rosettes. Make a round composed of 6 chain and 12 single stitch. The second round is composed, according to illustration, of chain stitch and single stitch. The third round is composed in like manner. The exterior is composed of a round of chain stitch. Conclude with loops, according to illustration.

BERTHE.—No. 3.

This berthe is made of black net, trimmed with black and white lace, small loops of black or green velvet at the top and bottom, with white insertion between each row, and narrow velvet run in the lace. A low of black or green velvet (either looks very pretty) in front.

COLLAR, SLEEVE, AND CUFF.—Nos. 4, 6, & 9.

This pretty set is made of fine linen and insertion



CROCHET ROSETTE.—No. 2.

of lace edged with lace. The linen is stitched on in narrow bands across to form scallops.

VISITING CARD CASE.—No. 5.

BRISTOL board is the foundation of this case. It is covered with brown velvet. The illustration shows the case in diminished form. The basket-like ornamentation is in black velvet. Gum arabic is used to



BERTHE.—No. 3.

secure the figures, which are edged round with gold cord. The divisions are of brown sarcenet used double, and the only pocket is edged round with black beads.



CUFF.—No. 4.

IMITATION POINT LACE IN RIBBON AND CROCHET WORK.—No. 7.

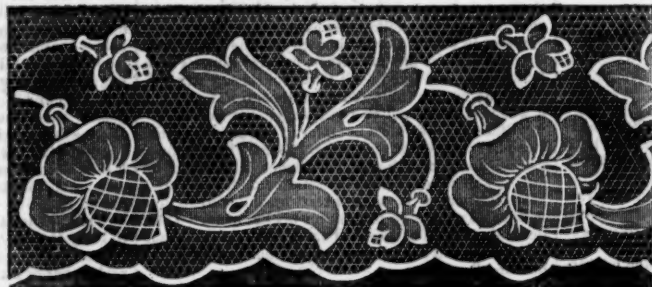
For the upper edge of this lace work according to illustration in the ribbon * 1 ss, 2 ls, 2 ls. Wind twice round the needle, then 4 ch. Repeat from *.

Three rounds complete the lace.

1st round.—* 3 ss in the ribbon, 3 ch, after which leave a space, then 1 collected s (viz., 1s in 1 s), 3 ch. Repeat from *.

2nd round.—3 ss on the ss of the previous round; 3 ch, 1 collected s in the first ch scallop, 3 ch, 2 through 3 ch divided collected a round the following ch scallop, 3 ch. Repeat from *.

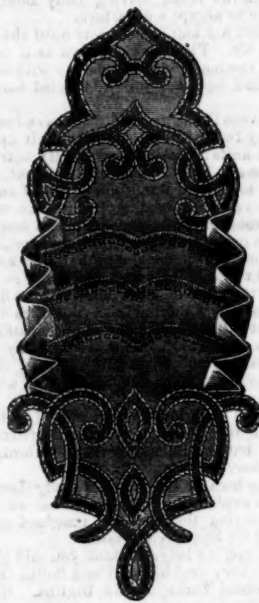
3rd round.—1 ss on the middle ss of the previous round, 3 ch, * 1 ss, 2 ls, 2 ls winding twice round the needle; in the next ch a scallop 3 ch from * in two-fold repetition, 1 ss in next ch, 3 ch. Repeat from *.



MUSLIN EMBROIDERY.—No. 1.

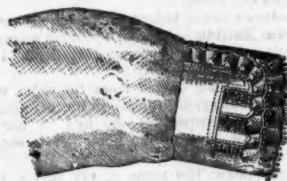
COLLAR WITH JABOT.—No. 8.

A FINE linen band edged with Valenciennes gives a peculiar character to this collar. Valenciennes edging unites the vandykes to the collar. The vandykes are also adorned with designs in appliqué, and edged with Valenciennes lace. The jabot or frill is in two strips like the corners or vandykes. One of



VISITING CARD CASE.—No. 5.

these is edged with Valenciennes and adorned with designs in appliqué. The lower strip is of Valenciennes in delicately pleated folds. At the throat is placed a bow of muslin, lace, and embroidery.



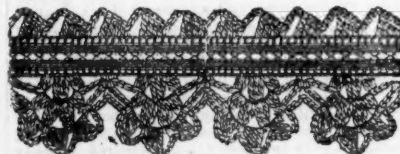
SLEEVE.—No. 6.

FASHIONS.

CHILDREN'S DRESSES.—Braiding is the fashionable trimming for children's clothing. Rich, thick patterns like heavy embroidery are braided on merino dresses in soutache or star braid of the colour of the dress. Little dresses of black velveteen braided with white soutache are also exceedingly stylish. The skirt is but little gored, and is box-pleated to a plain waist that fastens behind. A belt with square tabs

makes this look dressy. Both high and low necked waists are worn, the latter being made comfortable by under-waists of tucked and puffed muslin, worn over high-necked merino vests.

EVENING AND OTHER DRESSES.—Pink with black, and pale blue with prune-colour, are fashionable contrasts for evening dresses. A beautiful dress for a young lady is of pink silk with demi-train, trimmed to the knee with a kilt pleating of white tulle. Through the centre of this is a chain of puffs of pink silk, notched on the edges, and strapped between the puffs with black velvet ribbon edged with lace. Tulle over-skirt caught up with black velvet bows. Low pointed corsege, with tulle berthe, dotted with tiniest rose-buds. Another effective dress in these colours has the pink silk trained skirt covered to the waist with narrow ruffles of black velvet, alternating with pink silk ruffles fringed out at the edges. These frills are on all the breadths except the front, which has flat velvet bands crossing it, and Pompadour bows of pink silk down the centre. The bodice is of black velvet, with large postillion behind and long sharp point in front. These narrow flounces on the back of the skirt make a dress gracefully beaflant behind, and the untrimmed front is as flat as fashion requires. The dark velvet is very effective when associated with silk of pale colour prettily fringed



IMITATION POINT LACE AND CROCHET LACE. No. 7.



COLLAR WITH JABOT.—No. 8.

out. Violet-coloured velvet and pale mauve silk are pretty together. Prune-colour and pale blue are more



COLLAR.—No. 9.

stylish than the pearl gray and blue so long worn. Black velvet and blue faille flounces are exceedingly handsome. Skirts of suits for day wear are also ruffled on the back breadths. A black gros grain skirt has an apron trimming of velvet bands. The rest of the skirt widths are entirely covered with alternate flounces of black gros grain and velvet. Black velvet basque, with gros grain vest and sleeves.

Her Majesty's ship "Sultan," admitted to be the finest iron-clad in the world, will remain at Chatham for a few days longer. Some of the most distinguished persons in England have visited her lately. Prince Murat obtained a special order to inspect her a few days since, but was suddenly called away to Chislehurst to have an interview with the Empress of the French, and afterwards left to see the French Emperor.

THE DIAMOND MERCHANT.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

FOR a few moments after Lady Van De Veer's yearning utterance of the words "Dear England!" Ulgiha remained upon her knees, with her head bowed, and her clasped hands trembling, while a passionate sobbing shook her frame.

"Dear England!" at length repeated Ulgiha, raising her streaming eyes; and it was wonderful to see how her bitter grief could soften the hard lines of her face, and clothe it with the remnants of a beauty Lady Louise had never imagined could have been its own. "Dear England! Would to Heaven I had never, never left thee, dear England! Oh, my lady, I was not of gentle birth, but my parents were good townspeople; my father a tradesman—not rich, but comfortable; and all went happy with me until I wedded. I speak not of the wretch I call husband—oh, not of Rudolph Schwartz—but my English husband, who is dead, alas! A happy wife was I until I lost my kind English husband. Ill fortune take the day when we two left England to travel through Germany. We were waylaid and captured in this great forest, my lady, and my husband was slain before my eyes—my husband and my father too, while striving to beat off the Riders, as these robbers call themselves. Then began my life of woe, for I became the prey and spoil of ruthless men—a captive, a slave for years—until to have one, at least one protector from the cruelty of all, I wedded Schwartz, thinking it better to have one master than a hundred. Twenty years, lady, have I been in this forest, careless of everything since Heaven robbed me of my first husband. Oh, I tried to escape again and again, until despair hardened me and I became what I am—more ready to do evil than to cherish a single good thought. But the sound of my dear native tongue, and the wailing cry, 'Dear England!' made my soul melt, and it seemed as if I were a child again. But that is over now," she added, rising and sweeping from her face all traces of her tears. "I hope you did not cry 'Dear England!' with a heart as bitter as mine, my lady."

"Oh, no, Ulgiha," replied Lady Louise, in a gentle, compassionate voice; "no grief like yours has ever fallen upon me."

"Ah," thought Ulgiha, more soft of heart than she had been for many a year, "she little suspects that her husband has been slain here in the same forest in which mine met his death, and that even now she is in peril of being made as I have been made. I wonder she escaped as she did; though, since Sir Fritz became chief of the Riders, no woman has been tossed to ruthless men as sheep to ravening wolves, as it used to be when cruel Baron Hermann held command in person. Sir Fritz is dead, they say, and the old Baron of Zweibrücken back again—at least, so Rudolph said."

"Ulgiha," asked Lady Louise, "from what part of England came you?"

"I was born and reared in—But why tell where I was born?" cried Ulgiha, suddenly checking herself. "It may chance that you, who were born in England, may know my family name, or even some of my relatives. All believe I have been dead these many years. Let not the misery of my fate be known to them, nor to any, lest my shame and sorrow reach them."

"As you please, Ulgiha. I would not vex you, poor woman. My mother, I have heard, lost her husband—not my father—somewhere in Germany, ere she married her second husband, who is my father."

"Ay, that may be, my lady, since this forest has made many a wife a widow, many a child an orphan. Since I became an inhabitant of its gloom I know that many a traveller from England has fallen into the hands of the Riders. Some paid ransom, and were then set free. Many fought to defend themselves, and were slain. Some have died in the dungeons at 'The Rock,' because their friends were slow in sending the demanded ransom. Your father may have been one of them."

"Not my father, Ulgiha, since he is still alive and well in France, or was, a few months ago. I said that it was my mother's first husband, not my father, who lost his life somewhere in Germany. My father's name is Charles Von Karldenburg, Count

of Karldenburg, in Flanders, though for many years he has lived in France. Nor have I seen him since I was a child, for he has always been in the army. My mother was born in Oxford, in England—"

"In Oxford?" repeated Ulgiha, much interested, for it was the place of her birth.

"In Oxford, Ulgiha. Were you ever there?"

"I—I—passed through it once—many years ago. Were you born in Oxford?" asked Ulgiha, gazing with increased interest upon Lady Louise, in whom she now believed she saw not only a fellow-countrywoman, but also a fellow-townswoman.

"Yes, in dear Oxford, where my mother, who was a widow ere she met my father, married him. There I was born, and lived until I was fourteen years old. Then my mother followed my father to France, and it was in France, not two years ago, that I married."

"Since she was born in Oxford," thought Ulgiha, "and lived there fourteen years, she must have known many whom I once knew. I wonder if it could be possible that I ever knew her mother. Some grand lady, the widow of some great lord, doubtless her mother was, too high in rank for my knowing. Yet I knew the names of many of the gentry in and about Oxford. I will ask her the name of her mother's first husband."

So, with assumed carelessness, and really expecting to hear the name of some great person, Ulgiha said:

"What was the name of your mother's first husband, my lady? I suppose he was a knight, or perhaps a baron."

"Oh, no. He was not of the gentry, though of a very honourable yeoman family. He was a tradesman, a dealer in foreign stuffs and laces. His name, I have heard my mother say, was Roland Yorke."

"Roland Yorke!" cried Ulgiha, who then instantly hurried from the room, leaving Lady Louise much surprised by so abrupt a departure.

Ulgiha did not halt in her haste until she was out in the open air. Then sinking down as if faint and sick before the lonely old inn, she lay with her cheek to the ground, and her yellow, tangled hair in the dust.

"Oh, Heaven!" she groaned. "I have heard the name of my father! She spoke it! It cut to my heart like a knife! Roland Yorke! My dear father's beloved name! He was slain in this forest, and my Launcelot, too!—and I was made what I am! what I am!" she repeated, beating the ground with her hands, in woe and shame and speechless despair.

A torrent of tears came to her relief, and, rising to her feet, she beat the dust from her hair and dress, and moved towards the house, muttering:

"It was the name of my father; but the first husband of the lady's mother may not have been my father. Yet such was the name and occupation of my father. Oh, if the mother of this lady is my mother! But that cannot be. This lady's father, she says, is a great noble, a Flemish count; could a noble of Flanders have wedded the widow of an English tradesman? I will learn the name of this lady's mother—the family name, and the Christian name. There was but one Roland Yorke in Oxford, and he was my father."

Hastening back to the room of Lady Louise, and having first explained the reason of her sudden departure by saying that she had imagined some one was calling for her, Ulgiha said:

"Pardon me, my lady. I think you said the name of your mother's first husband was Rollin Oak?"

"No; Roland Yorke, I said, Ulgiha. Her name was Matilda."

"Heavens! Matilda was the name of my mother!" mentally exclaimed Ulgiha, pretending to be very busy about the room. "Matilda, did you say, my lady? I once had a friend named Matilda—I think her name was Matilda Ramsay before she married, and, now I come to think of it, she married a man named Yorke, but whether his name was Roland or Richard I do not know."

"My mother's name, before she married her first husband, was Matilda Edgefield, a yeoman's daughter. Her father's name was Gorman Edgefield. I have heard my mother say—"

Again Ulgiha had darted from the room, unable to remain without giving tongue to her emotions.

On this second departure she fled to her own apartment below, and, falling upon her knees, exclaimed:

"She has spoken the name of my father, of my mother, and of my mother's father! She is the daughter of Matilda Yorke, who was the daughter of Gorman Edgefield! Therefore she is my half-sister! This gentle lady, whose father is a great noble of Flanders, and whose husband was the famous diamond merchant, Sir Edred Van De Veer, is my sister!"

Overcome by this discovery, Ulgiha was for a long time like one who has received a stunning blow upon the head. Power to fix or concentrate thought was for a time lost to her. She moaned and beat the

floor with her open hands, muttering incoherently, and sobbing thus:

"What she is I might have been! Good, beautiful, beloved, honoured! Nay, as she is I was—Heaven help me!—as she is I was, until fate led me, father and my husband to travel into this accursed country. Thank Heaven, no child was ever born to me. So I have robbed my own sister of her babe! I have stolen it and sold it! I dare not tell her the truth. I have told her the babe was a boy, and that it is dead—that I have buried it! Oh, when I gazed at her the other night—when I was robbing her of her babe—I remember that I said to myself, 'This poor lady has much in her pale, beautiful face that reminds me of my mother, as she used to look when I was a child.' Ah, little did I dream that I was gazing upon the face of my mother's own child! What shall I do? What shall I do? I dare not—I cannot tell her that her mother was my mother! I dare not tell her that, and not tell her that I have stolen and sold her child. If I tell one, I must tell the other. She dislikes me now—how can any one like me, wretch that I am!—she dislikes me now, but if I say to her, 'I am your mother's daughter, your half-sister,' she will loathe me. If I tell her I have robbed her of her babe, and sold it away, she will abhor me, she will curse me, gentle as she is. Nor dare I tell her that her husband is doubtless dead—slain by the Riders—and that I have all his jewels! What shall I do? What shall I do? I had almost made up my mind to desert her and the handsome boy whose face is like sunshine, and to fly with the jewels, and leave her and him to the mercy of Rudolph; but I cannot do that now—no, no, a thousand times, no!"

Thus agitated in heart, mind, and soul, Ulgiha rocked herself to and fro, trying to fix upon some scheme by which she might be rid of Rudolph Schwartz, and serve Lady Louise and the boy Ernest.

The plan at length fixed upon by Ulgiha, by which she could be rid of Rudolph Schwartz, remain to serve Lady Louise until such time as the lady might be strong enough to resume her journey, and also to for ever forsake the forest life she had led for so many years, we have seen partially developed in her stormy interview with Rudolph, immediately upon his return from Hansfelt's.

With this plan in her mind, Ulgiha returned to the room of Lady Louise, saying:

"My lady, I hurried away just now because I was sure I heard Rudolph calling, and expected he had returned with Master Ernest."

"But you told me you did not expect that they would get back before night, and perhaps not before to-morrow morning."

"True, my lady; yet they might, if Rudolph takes a shorter road than—Well, in truth, I am so eager to have them back that I fancy I hear Rudolph's voice before or behind the house every moment. Is your mother still living, my lady?"

"She was a few months ago, and in good health."

Hearing this, Ulgiha was scarcely able to refrain from rushing out for the third time. As it was she turned her back towards Lady Louise, lest the lady should see the spasm of agony and shame that seized upon her features.

"Is she very old, my lady?" she asked, feigning to be sweeping the room.

"She is between fifty and sixty, Ulgiha—nearer sixty than fifty, perhaps—but when I saw her last, not two years ago, she might pass for forty, so fair and fresh and well was she. Dear mother! I would I were with her now!"

Ulgiha found good use for her broom just at that moment. From her eyes to the uncarpeted floor had fallen several great tears, and she dashed the broom over them with fierce haste.

"I am not thirty-eight," thought Ulgiha, "yet my face is that of a woman of sixty! Sin and grief and wretchedness! how soon do you make a woman's face like the scar of a cruel burn! My mother lives—is a countess! and I—Oh, Heaven! would she recognise her fair-haired, blue-eyed, lily-skinned Margaret in me? No, no! Could she be made to believe that the hag of the 'Iron Hand' inn is her once darling daughter? No, no! Could I, bad as I am, dare put such shame and grief upon her? Never! Mother! dear mother! you believe your fair-haired darling is dead—and it is well you do. Oh, my mother!"

This last came from her heart, and leaped from her lips in a wail of despair that amazed Lady Louise.

"My lady, my lady!" cried Ulgiha, turning and stretching her hands towards her, while her scarred and battered face was convulsed with agony, "I had a mother—yonder in dear England. She is dead, no doubt. Oh! if she lives, may she never learn of the wretched fate of her daughter! Hearing you say 'dear mother' swept my heart back to the time when I—a happy, loving, pure-minded bride then—pressed

my lips to hers, and said, 'Good-bye, dear mother; we shall be back again—father, husband, and I—next year, then we shall never part again, dear mother!' Oh! oh! my heart! added the miserable woman. 'I wish I was dead! I wish I had never been born!' (To be continued.)

FACETIÆ.

A CAUTION.—The man who can't resist "just a thimbleful" of brandy will sometimes find the thimbleful holds enough to sew him up.—*Punch*.

"**WOMEN,**" remarked the contemplative man, "are as deep as the blue waters of yon bay." "Ay, sir," rejoined the disappointed man, "and as full of craft."

A **SNA** captain, invited to meet the committee of a society for the evangelisation of Africa, when asked, "Do the subjects of the King of Dahomy keep the Sabbath?" replied, "Yes, and everything else they can lay their hands on."

The wife of a wealthy citizen having sought to get the management of his property into her hands on the ground of his insanity, he attempted to prove his soundness of mind by showing that he had succeeded in cutting down her milliners' bills.

AN ACCOMMODATING MAMMA.

Young Nick: "Come, Sis, and play masquerade! I've got ma's new bonnet and dress, and her gold watch, and lots of other nice things!"

Mamma (who is deaf): "Yes, go and play with your brother, and be good."

Two Irishmen were one day engaged in roofing a house, when one of them lost his hold and fell to the ground. The other hastened to him, and asked, when he found him prostrate and still, "Mickey, Mickey, are you dead?" "No," replied Mickey, "not dead, but apoplexical!"

A CHANGE FOR THE WORSE.—*La France* says: "The Prussians have no right to march through Paris. The Prussians have not taken Paris—it is famine." Let us hope, if *La France* is right, that famine mayn't insist on marching into the city instead of the Prussians. She is too near the gates to be pleasant already.—*Punch*.

"WHAT IS SAUCE FOR," ETC.

Weary Labourer: "What be these roots thee be diggin', Ned?"

Ned: "They be artichokes for squire's dinner—they serve them wi' butter sauce in silver dishes."

Weary Labourer: "What dang'd queer things they gentfolkos do eat. I wish they would serve some o' us poor chaps wi' butter sauce in any sort o' dishes."—*Fun*.

INNOCENCE.

Husband: "Your first day with hounds! I'm afraid it'll be a blank day, my dear!"

Young Wife (shocked): "A — day! Oh, Charles, don't swear! I'm sure it's delightful! Just now, when you were talking to that old gentleman in the wood, I saw a little rabbit, and I tried to show some of the dogs where it had gone; and, Charles, the man in the cap came up and beat them, and looked so cross at me! I could not help its escaping!"—*Punch*.

A MOVING TALE.

We should like to know the process adopted by the gentleman mentioned in this advertisement:

FOR SALE, a MANSION, at Headingley, in consequence of the present owner and occupier leaving Leeds with five acres of pleasure grounds. Apply, etc. It would be very desirable indeed to learn how when "pleasure begins to pall" in one place, as Moore observes in his melodies, we may not only "order our wings" but put our acres into our portmanteau and be off somewhere else.—*Fun*.

MAN-MILLINERS.

A country contemporary, apparently aroused at length by the Continental cataclysm from the sound repose into which it had lapsed through reading its own leaders, announces as a novelty that:

They have man-milliners in San Francisco. Let us electrify our drowsy friend by a few parallel passages.

There are bad Manillas in Whitechapel. There are many milliners in Manchester. There are mad malingers in Military Hospitals. And so on *ad infinitum*. What we would fain adumbrate gently to this somnolent journal is that if he didn't know of the existence of "man-milliners" before, and was not aware that the Paris fashions were presided over by a gentleman, now unfortunately arrived, *vid* balloon, at a Prussian fortress, his experience on the subject is little Worth.—*Fun*.

EXCITING.

The following notice has been issued, and ere this appears the event may have come off:

THE POLICE and VACCINATION.—All the members of the Metropolitan Police Force are to be vaccinated at once.

This is a really healthy mode of dealing with an

arm of the civil executive. We trust that the police will be mustered in full force in Hyde Park, and that no solemnity will be wanting to render the ceremony thoroughly impressive. If not too late, we would suggest the presence of the police band, to play "Uprouse ye, then, my merry, merry men, for 'tis our opening day." The thieves' proverb for the occasion will probably be "The police vaccination is the roughs' opportunity." But, by the way, how will they "all" be done "at once?" By electricity? If so, Hyde Park by all means. Field and battery review, with cows in the distance, gazing placidly on the scene. *Aux armes, citoyens!* Lancets to the front! and be our war-cry on that day, vaccination and victory!—*Punch*.

The wife of a manufacturer in a provincial town, whose daughter was about to be married, sent notice to her friends, requesting that if they intended to make wedding presents of silver plate, they would send the money instead, as she was about to visit London, and would prefer to buy the articles herself, "for it will be so nice to have the things match, you know."

TO A TREE.

Leafless tree,
Lessons in life thou teachest me!
When Winter's iron hand is ruling
Bare ye stand his mandant will
And searching frown; alavlike
Ye bend and bow to all his heavy chidings:
Submissive to his kingly rule with
Tremblings and deep humility. When
His cold voice falls powerless through
Kinder spring-time's rule and warmer
Smile, how then your hopes return!
And you rise freed from thy harsh servitude
To enrich thy meek deliverer and again
Beautify the land with thy feathery garlands.
Working out the bidding of thy Almighty
Creator!

Lifelike tree,
Pictures in life thou showest me!
Thy buds nurs'd by the sun's warm ray,
(Cradled in infancy) peep forth: one by one
They assume youthful leaves, stems,
And flowers. More sedate
Emeralds then thy breast adorn, and
As the light winds revel through thy
Shadowy arms, they in fond embrace
Whisper a true love greeting. Matured
By the heated gaze of summer thy
Manhood and vernal boughs, illumine
Thy pleasant face with softest shades
And deepest graces, and give life varied
Yet beaming to every vein of thy stately
Form. Autumn soon o'ertakes thee
With his searing breath, blasts thy
Once radiant and happy glow, bids
Thy locks grow wan and thin and
Thy tottering millions fall pale and
Lifeless on the gray earth—thus
Deathlike ye enter winter's gloom.

GEO. C. SWAIN.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

FOR marine glue mix together gum sandrac, $\frac{1}{2}$ lb.; gum mastic, $\frac{1}{2}$ lb.; and methylated spirit, 8 lb. When the gums are dissolved, add $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. turpentine, and mix this with a hot solution of the best glue (to which a little ioxinglass has been added to clarify it), and filter through muslin. The marine glue will be impervious to moisture, and will not soften in any ordinarily hot weather.

A NEW DISINFECTANT.—The hydrated chloride of aluminum, long known to chemists, has lately been extensively used as a disinfecting agent. It is readily made by dissolving alumina in hydrochloric acid. The solution, on evaporating, leaves crystals of what was formerly called the sesquichloride of aluminum, in combination with three molecules of water. The atomic weight of aluminum having been doubled by agreement of advanced chemists, the sesquichloride becomes the trichloride of aluminum. The hydrated compound has all the virtues of the chloride of zinc, without any of its dangerous qualities. It arrests decomposition and destroys disease germs, and still is not injurious or dangerous when applied as a wash for the body or a gargle in cases of sore throat, diphtheria, hooping-cough, or scarlet fever. It has a sweetish astringent or aluminous taste. Its virtues are derived from the chlorine contained in it, being more highly charged with that element than common salt. It has been successfully used as an antiseptic and in the preservation of food.

LONDON INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION OF 1871.—Her Majesty's Commissioners have sent letters of invitation to the following musical composers of

European celebrity, requesting them each to compose a suitable piece of music for the opening of the Exhibition on the 1st of May, namely, M. Gounod, Herr Wagner, Signor Verdi, and Mr. Arthur Sullivan.

STATISTICS.

WISCONSIN.—The Secretary of the State of Wisconsin reports the following statistics of that state for 1870: The population, found at the census, is 1,055,550. The number of dwellings enumerated is 198,243; of families, 200,663; of church edifices, 1,396, with seats for 455,038 persons, and the value of the church property is returned as 4,749,983 dollars. The value of the personal property assessed is 79,218,533 dollars; of the lands, 169,661,316 dollars; of city and village lots, 77,835,389 dollars; total, 326,765,238 dollars. There are 73 newspapers, with an aggregate circulation of 261,635. The population is almost entirely white. In 1860, with rather more than three-fourths of the present population, there were 256 idiots and 283 insane persons; in 1870, 255 idiots, but no less than 691 insane, bringing the number of the insane up to one in every 1,528 persons. 16,532 immigrants arrived in the season April-October, 1870; 8,170 were Scandinavians and 6,868 Germans.

COPPER-MINING STATISTICS.—Copper-mining in Cornwall, which has been steadily declining—in 1860, 145,359 tons of copper ore were produced, and in 1869 only 71,790 tons—is now suffering from a new and a peculiar form of competition. Iron pyrites is now imported in enormous quantities from Spain and Norway for the manufacture of sulphuric acid on Tyneside and in Lancashire. After the extraction of the sulphur from the Spanish ores, the residue is operated on for the 2 per cent. of copper it contains; and in 1869 no less than about 4,000 tons of metal were thus obtained; the entire yield from native ores in the same year being 8,291 tons. The importation of those pyritic ores increases rapidly; and it is not unlikely that Newcastle and Liverpool may by-and-by take a large share of what has hitherto been a speciality of Swansea.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE mails for New Zealand will in future be sent *via* New York and San Francisco.

THE schools created under the Education Act will require 35,000 teachers; we have only one-third that number of certificated teachers at present.

THE cable between Lisbon and Gibraltar has been repaired, and the communication by the submarine lines to Egypt and India has been restored, the lines being again in perfect working order.

THE bill to enable the Queen to settle an annuity on the Princess Louisa has been issued. It consists simply of two clauses, one of which charges the annuity of 6,000*l.* on the consolidated fund.

HIS Royal Highness the Prince of Wales has named Monday, the 8th of May next, for the anniversary festival of the Royal Masonic Institution for Girls, at which he has consented to preside.

IT is understood that Her Majesty will be invited to open the new Grammar School at Reading, the foundation-stone of which was laid by the Prince of Wales.

A LADIES' Life Assurance Company is one of the fruits of the Act of last session, making it lawful for married women to assure their own lives with their own money, without the consent of their husbands.

A 103RD BIRTHDAY.—Robert Howlison, West Linton, Peeblesshire, was recently presented with an address and a purse containing 25 sovereigns, by a number of friends, on the occasion of his 103rd birthday.

MOST extensive preparations are being made for brilliantly illuminating Berlin on the return of the army. The town-hall will be lit up at a cost of 1,000*l.* a night for gas alone. Of course the French are to pay the expense.

THE following claims of peerage are depending in the House of Lords—*vis.*: The Mar peerage, Breadalbane peerage, Dingwall peerage, Butler (of Moore Park) peerage, Airth peerage, Strathern and Monteith peerages, Botsreux, Hungerford, etc., peerages, and the Beaumont peerage.

THE NEW FOREST.—The inhabitants of Southampton have held a meeting to consider the proposed Government scheme for leasing the New Forest. Resolutions were passed declaring that any scheme which did not provide small farms on long leases for the benefit of agricultural labourers, would not tend to decrease pauperism and crime, and deprecating the passing of any portion of the land into private hands. Another resolution declared that the allotment of small farms to labouring men requires to be accompanied by suitable loans, to be repaid by easy instalments.

The Last Snowdrop.

A REVERIE.

C. LINDA.

Grazioso, alla cantabile

PIANO.

p dolc.

Firm. mf *cres.*

languente. *D.C.* *espres.*

1st *2nd* *rall.* *Repeat 8va.* *pp*

cadenza, ad lib. *p* *rall.*

8va. *rall.* *cres.* *accel.* *F*

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